



Legislative Assembly
of Ontario
Second Session, 39th Parliament

Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario
Deuxième session, 39^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 22 March 2011

Mardi 22 mars 2011

Speaker
Honourable Steve Peters

Président
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk
Deborah Deller

Greffière
Deborah Deller

Hansard on the Internet

Hansard and other documents of the Legislative Assembly can be on your personal computer within hours after each sitting. The address is:

<http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Index inquiries

Reference to a cumulative index of previous issues may be obtained by calling the Hansard Reporting Service indexing staff at 416-325-7410 or 325-3708.

Le Journal des débats sur Internet

L'adresse pour faire paraître sur votre ordinateur personnel le Journal et d'autres documents de l'Assemblée législative en quelques heures seulement après la séance est :

Renseignements sur l'index

Adressez vos questions portant sur des numéros précédents du Journal des débats au personnel de l'index, qui vous fourniront des références aux pages dans l'index cumulatif, en composant le 416-325-7410 ou le 325-3708.

Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
Room 500, West Wing, Legislative Building
111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation
Salle 500, aile ouest, Édifice du Parlement
111, rue Wellesley ouest, Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1A2
Téléphone, 416-325-7400; télécopieur, 416-325-7430
Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO**

Tuesday 22 March 2011

**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO**

Mardi 22 mars 2011

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the Sikh prayer.

Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

**CHRISTOPHER'S LAW (SEX OFFENDER
REGISTRY) AMENDMENT ACT, 2011**

**LOI DE 2011 MODIFIANT
LA LOI CHRISTOPHER
SUR LE REGISTRE
DES DÉLINQUANTS SEXUELS**

Mr. Bradley moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 163, An Act to amend Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 / Projet de loi 163, Loi modifiant la Loi Christopher de 2000 sur le registre des délinquants sexuels.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I rise in the House today to, first of all, offer some background into the Ontario sex offender registry and the amendments the government is recommending to this important piece of community safety legislation. I think we would all agree that every Ontarian has the right to live a life free of sexual abuse. As legislators, we must do all that we can to protect our children from such abuse.

Ten years ago, almost to the month, Christopher's Law was proclaimed, establishing Canada's first sex offender registry and giving police services the tools they need to track and monitor convicted sex offenders in the province. Christopher's Law was an initiative of the previous government and was unanimously passed by the Ontario Legislature. Christopher Stephenson was an 11-year-old boy who was abducted from a Brampton shopping mall on Father's Day weekend in 1988 by a convicted pedophile on federal release. His abused body was discovered a few days later.

The police will tell you that the first 24 hours are crucial in any child abduction case. The Ontario sex offender registry enables the police to do the following: to quickly identify known pedophiles, rapists and other sex offenders living in the area; to interview and eliminate suspects during the critical early hours of an investi-

gation; and to narrow the field when searching for the abductor.

Christopher's father, Jim Stephenson, is convinced that had a sex offender registry been in place at the time his son was taken, there would have been a much different outcome, and we will all recall that Mr. Stephenson was with us upon the introduction of this bill in the House the other day. He had said so in Ottawa two years ago at a House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security.

In December 2004, the federal government proclaimed legislation which created a national sex offender registry. This government has always supported the implementation of a national sex offender registry. Recently, the federal government passed legislation amending the national sex offender registry. Many of the amendments were changes advocated by the Ontario government, and we are pleased that our advocacy has been successful. We continue to work with federal officials to further enhance the registry to make it a more valuable investigative tool for police services.

One significant advantage of having a national registry is that Ontario's police services can keep track of an offender who has left the province. Still, there are enough differences in the provincial and federal approaches to the registry to make it necessary to maintain a provincial system. For example, the Ontario registry can display offender residences within specific proximity to a given location, such as a school. The Ontario registry also provides timely access for all police services in the province, and that is a difference between the federal and provincial registry. You would know that the federal registry deals with only one police service, and that is the OPP. So the OPP, in turn, would deal with our local services. In Ontario, all police services have access to the information on the Ontario registry.

As effective as the Ontario system was, we always consider that there is room for improvement. Any system that fails to keep pace with society's demands or falls behind technology's rapid march forward is a system hurtling toward obscurity. That is why, in 2008, this government amended Christopher's Law to enhance the effectiveness of the Ontario sex offender registry. As a result of these amendments, all those serving an intermittent sentence must register within 15 days of conviction; all those who are released on bail pending an appeal must register within 15 days of release; police services must notify the Ontario sex offender registry if they receive notification from a mental health facility that a person who is not criminally responsible in relation to a sex of-

fence is being released from a facility unsupervised; and provincial correctional facilities must notify the Ontario sex offender registry of all sex offenders released from a correctional facility on an unescorted temporary pass within 24 hours before the release.

Together, these amendments obliged more offenders to register and, in some cases, register sooner so that police and the registry have an accurate account of all sex offenders in the community at any given time. Ontario happens to have a compliance rate of over 97%.

As Ontario was strengthening the province's own sex offender registry, the federal government was reviewing the national registry. In 2009, MPs in Ottawa launched a parliamentary review of the national sex offender registry, and on December 9, 2010, a federal act that will amend the legislation that established the national registry received royal assent.

0910

Once proclaimed, the amended legislation will create differences between the national and Ontario registries that this government wishes to address with proposed amendments to Christopher's Law, which will be changed in such a way as to synchronize the two laws.

Ontario continues to be the only province to maintain its own sex offender registry. We will stick to this path because we believe it provides us with direct control over the tools that our police services tell us they need to track and monitor convicted sex offenders quickly and effectively. Even with federal enhancements to the national sex offender registry, Ontario's registry will still maintain advantages as an investigative tool over the national registry, as will be clear as the debate continues.

The Ontario sex offender registry provides police with the information they need to help provide protection for persons who may be at risk. A sex offender registry is also an effective tool in preventing such crimes. According to the Washington State Institute for Public Policy, offenders convicted for failing to register are 50% more likely to reoffend. As Jim Stephenson has said, the sex offender registry reminds a sex offender that somebody is watching. If that isn't preventive enough, I don't know what else can be suggested.

The amendments to be proposed today will better align the Ontario sex offender registry with the national sex offender registry to maintain the prompt, effective sharing of information. It will also maintain the Ontario system's independence, to be a more effective investigative tool and to provide greater protection for Ontario's communities. To review, the amendments we are proposing to Christopher's Law would help align the legislation with the national sex offender registry legislation as amended by Bill S-2.

Members of this House are aware that it was on April 4, 2000, that the Ontario government passed Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 2000 to establish and maintain a registry of sex offenders that police can use proactively for investigative purposes and crime prevention, and that the federal government established a national sex offender registry in 2004. The national

registry was similar to Ontario's, though it was less comprehensive. On December 9, 2010, the federal government passed that legislation which we referred to as Bill S-2, which brings the national registry more in line with Ontario's. However, the legislation, as I have pointed out, will create some differences between the national and provincial registries that will be important to resolve.

The sex offender registry is based on a very simple proposition: That is, if police know the whereabouts of a convicted sex offender in the community, they are better able to identify potential threats and can better focus their investigation into actual crimes. That is why Christopher's Law requires offenders convicted of a criteria offence and residing in Ontario to register with their local police service within 15 days after a triggering event such as a release from custody, name change or address change. Where there is no custodial sentence, they must register within 15 days after being convicted of a sex offence or within 15 days of receiving an absolute or conditional discharge for a sex offence when found not criminally responsible on account of mental disorder.

Currently, police services in Ontario are responsible for Ontario and national sex offender registrations, but police services in Ontario have direct access only to the Ontario registry to input and search offender information.

Because information captured by the Ontario and national registries is similar, police services in Ontario are only required to submit offender information into the Ontario registry. Information required by the national registry is automatically transmitted from the Ontario registry. However, the national registry will now require Ontario police services to collect additional information that cannot be entered into the Ontario registry because there is no legislative authority to do so. As a result, information that is automatically submitted to the national registry could be incomplete.

When Bill S-2 is actually proclaimed, there will be differences between the Ontario and national registries in the following areas—and this, essentially, is why this legislation is before this House.

First, reporting obligations: S-2 requires offenders to register within seven days, while the present Ontario legislation requires registration within 15 days. Offenders convicted outside of Canada are another situation: The federal registry will require registration of offenders convicted outside of Canada while the Ontario legislation, at the present time, does not.

There are also pardon provisions which would be different. The national registry will maintain the records of registered offenders who receive a pardon under the Criminal Records Act. Information pertaining to all pardoned offenders must be removed at the present time from the Ontario registry.

The federal legislation will also require the reporting of certain volunteer and employment information, while Christopher's Law does not now require this.

The legislative amendments we are proposing would ensure consistency between the registries. Consistency is

critical to the effectiveness of the registries, both national and provincial. It will help ensure that more offenders of interest are identified by an Ontario registry search during time-sensitive investigations. As members are well aware, time is of the essence in all of these investigations.

Having different Ontario and national registry reporting periods could increase the workload for Ontario police services. They would have to manually register offenders in Ontario to the national registry and confirm that offenders are fulfilling their national and Ontario reporting obligations if the registries happen to be inconsistent. The process of manual uploading of information from local police to the OPP, the only Ontario police service with direct access to the national registry, and from the OPP to the national registry could take up to four weeks, much too long for time-sensitive investigations. This bill will ensure that Ontario continues to provide offender information to the national registry electronically and in real time.

Furthermore, there are differences in the time allowed for offenders to report to the Ontario registry and the national registry. Offenders may fail to differentiate the Ontario and national reporting requirements, resulting in potential criminal charges for offenders who mistakenly believe they have 15 days to report to the national registry.

Including sex offenders in the Ontario registry who have been convicted of a sex crime outside of Canada will help ensure that more offenders of interest are identified by an Ontario registry search.

The bill proposes to address these issues in the following ways:

Section 1 of the bill would add two new clauses to the definition of “sex offence” in section 1 of the act. New clauses (b.2) and (b.3) would result in offences which were committed outside of Canada being included in the definition if the person who committed the offence is required to report to the federal sex offender registry, pursuant to an obligation under either section 490.02901 of the Criminal Code or section 36.1 of the International Transfer of Offenders Act.

0920

Section 2 of the bill would amend section 3 of the act to remove the 15-day reporting timelines and would provide for the timelines to be prescribed by regulation. The section would be further amended by adding two clauses, (e.1) and (e.2), which would require offenders who are subject to a federal sex offender registry reporting obligation pursuant to section 490.02901 of the Criminal Code or section 36.1 of the International Transfer of Offenders Act to report to the Ontario registry within the time prescribed in the regulation.

Section 3 of the bill would amend section 7 of the act to remove the 15-day reporting timelines and have the timelines prescribed by regulation.

Section 3 of the bill also contains transition provisions which would stipulate that if the events that trigger a reporting obligation in subsection 7(2) of the act occur

before the bill comes into force, the old reporting obligation provisions would apply, and if such events occur on or after the day the bill comes into force, the new reporting obligation provisions would apply.

Section 4 of the bill would amend section 8 of the act to state that it applies to persons who become subject to an obligation to report to the national sex offender registry pursuant to section 490.02901 of the Criminal Code on or after the day this bill comes into force. It goes on to state that the duration of the reporting obligation under the act is for the duration of that federal reporting obligation.

Section 4 of the bill would further amend section 8 of the act to state that it applies to persons who become subject to an obligation to report to the national sex offender registry pursuant to section 36.1 of the International Transfer of Offenders Act on or after the day this bill comes into force. It goes on to state that the duration of the reporting obligation under the act is for the duration of that federal reporting obligation.

Section 5 of the bill would repeal subsection 9(3) of the act. Under that subsection, the ministry is required to remove all of an offender’s information from the registry if the offender receives a pardon for all of the sex offences that triggered a reporting obligation.

Section 6 of the bill would add a new section to the act, section 9.1, which would require the ministry to remove all of an offender’s information from the registry if the offender receives a free pardon for all of the sex offences that triggered a reporting obligation.

Section 7 of the bill would add a new regulation-making power to section 14 of the act allowing for regulations to be made in relation to the various timelines for reporting set out in subsections 3(1) and 7(2) of the act.

Even with the proclamation of Bill S-2, Ontario’s registry will maintain the following advantages over the national registry:

—It is accessible by every police service in Ontario, whereas the national registry is only accessible by the OPP at their general headquarters in Orillia—I’m going to make reference to the general headquarters in a moment. As a result, local police services have to contact the OPP to conduct national registry searches.

—It allows police to perform searches that display the offender residences within a specific proximity to a given location, such as a school; the national registry does not have this capability.

—The provincial registry maintains historical and most recent photographs of offenders; the national registry maintains only the most recent photograph. Ontario’s registry is routinely checked by police services in the course of their investigations.

—Ontario’s sex offender registry has a compliance rate of more than 97%, one of the highest compliance rates of all sex offender registries in operation, including registries in the United States.

Christopher’s Law is an important piece of legislation. It is based on a very simple proposition; that is, if police know the whereabouts of all convicted sex offenders in

the community, they are better able to identify potential threats and can better focus their investigations. The amendments proposed in this bill would, if adopted by this House, maintain smooth and efficient sharing of information between local police services and both registries, and more closely align the Ontario sex offender registry with the national registry.

I made reference to the fact that at the headquarters of the Ontario Provincial Police in Orillia, there are many services that are available. Upon touring that particular facility in my capacity as Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, one of the areas that was pointed out to me, and one which was of particular interest, was the kind of sophisticated equipment that the OPP has and the well-trained and -educated people whom the OPP happens to have as part of its operation and who deal with the sex offender registry. The individuals who are involved in this operation, whether they are individuals who serve in local or regional police services or whether they are at the national or provincial level—in other words, the RCMP at the national level or the Ontario Provincial Police, in our case, at the provincial level—well, I'll tell you that one of the most difficult jobs that a person can have in the field of policing is the job of identifying child pornography and the abuse of children through the making and showing of that child pornography. The dedicated people who deal with these matters are to be commended by all citizens of the province of Ontario.

It has to be particularly difficult to have the job of viewing, on a daily basis, literally thousands of photographs and information that would come available to our individuals who are assigned to this task or volunteer for this task as part of their duties in police services across our province and our country. When you see them interviewed on television, hear them on the radio or see them quoted in the newspapers or magazines, you will note that almost invariably, they talk about how difficult this is, particularly if they have children of their own, particularly younger children of their own, grandchildren or great-grandchildren. It is particularly difficult because obviously they can envision the possibility that their children might have, if it were not for fate or other circumstances, been caught in this kind of situation.

I think there's also a recognition that young children are vulnerable. They require the protection of all citizens. So, for instance, when computers are turned in for the purpose of repair and maintenance, or perhaps are being disposed of, those who happen to come upon child pornography within those computers and who take the time to notify police authorities are, again, doing something for which they are to be commended. They are assisting in trying to prevent something which has now become, because of computerization and because of the Internet, much more of an international activity than would have been the case in the past.

0930

Previously, people would have to exchange films or tapes or photographs, and they would have to perhaps do

it through the mail or through personal contact. Today, it is much easier because of the Internet, and that means even more children are vulnerable, keeping in mind that those who take the time to view child pornography are, in fact, contributing to the problem. While they may not have been the people who have produced it, they are enabling those who have produced it to have a market.

I think there's a general disgust in our society when we find that people who are in a very vulnerable position, our young children, are placed in this circumstance. So you should know, members of the House—I think most probably do—and people of the province, that our police services are vigilant. They have been given, over the years, by successive governments, more tools to deal with this problem. But police services across the country will tell you, whether it's a national, a provincial or a local police service, that those who break the law utilize new and different tools to do so. It means police have to have, first of all, the training and education to deal with this situation, and they are acquiring that. Some are now international experts who share information on how to deal with these problems; on an international basis, they share that information. Also, you need the latest equipment available to be able to track child pornography.

Our police services who looked for this tool some years ago, when this Legislature passed its bill unanimously—and it's interesting to note, when I say “unanimously,” that not everything in this House passes unanimously. There are philosophical differences, there are partisan differences and there are differences in individual thoughts about pieces of legislation and issues that come before this House. Where you find a consensus is on issues of this kind. I think it speaks well of all members of the Legislature that, in dealing with matters of this kind, we are together in trying to find the better tool, each and every time, for our police services to be able to carry out their individual responsibilities.

I think we recognize as well that when we have federal legislation and provincial legislation, we want to ensure as much as possible that they align with one another to avoid confusion. This bill and this kind of legislation is not a contest between one government and another government. Both governments have a similar goal. Some are in a more advantageous position, as we are provincially, for our local police services to access the OPP information; that's exceedingly important. But as much as possible, we want to ensure that the two laws align, and that is why this legislation is being brought forward.

The opportunity was provided to the opposition parties—as is, I think, quite common in the House—to be able to receive a briefing or for their staffs to receive a briefing on the legislation coming forward. I have found, in my experience in this House, that the viewpoints of all members are very helpful. Sometimes they confirm a government position; sometimes they do not. They may have other thoughts that may be contrary to a government position, or in some cases they may want to add to or change in a minor way a bill to make it better.

But I think, overall, the goal that we are looking for in this House is the alignment of the two bills. I don't want

to pre-empt what might happen, but my guess would be that the more we would think of amending this bill, the more challenging it becomes then to see it as aligned with the federal bill.

However, I know that will not prevent some of my colleagues from offering thoughts in this direction, and of course I have the greatest respect particularly for those who are the official critics in those areas, because they assume a certain expertise in a field, and all members of the House who bring their own experiences.

I think all of us, when we saw Christopher Stephenson's father in the House, were reminded of one instance of one family that was affected by this, and Mr. Stephenson has to live this over and over again. I want to commend, him because it has to be most difficult every time a piece of legislation of this kind comes forward, every time there's a reporting of a crime and every time there's a circumstance that would bring to his attention his son and the experience his son went through. His son, by the way, wrote some very compelling poems as a youngster that Mr. Stephenson has been kind enough to share with me. I know that when he comes to this House, he brings a presence which is very positive in its contribution, and I know that he has developed an expertise in legislation of this kind because of the circumstances that have been created by the tragedy that affected his family.

If we think of it, there are many Mr. Stephensons and Mrs. Stephensons across this province who have encountered this circumstance, and it's heartening to know that we, as legislators, can make a difference. There are those who, in their commentary, will say, "The elected members of a Legislature or a government really don't make much difference in our lives," and in some cases they may look and find some evidence that that is the case.

In the case of this particular piece of legislation and its predecessors, we have seen that members of this Legislature are echoing what they have heard in their communities and are taking to heart what individuals who have experienced the horror of the crimes of the nature of that which fell upon Christopher Stephenson have said, and that we are able to respond in a constructive and positive fashion to try to reduce the risk of this ever happening again.

So to my colleagues in the House, I recommend—and they will choose to do as they please; that is the nature of this House. But I would strongly recommend that we pass this legislation. I think you will find that the federal government—or the federal Parliament, I should say, not just the federal government, which has passed its legislation—would say that it is advantageous for the Ontario Legislature to have taken this action if, indeed, it chooses to do so.

I want to also note that in subsequent debate, Mr. Zimmer will be involved very much in the carriage of this bill. Mr. Zimmer has worked with opposition critics exceedingly well as a member of the legal profession and as a person who—again, as with all of us, the member for Willowdale has an interest in matters that relate to legal situations which confront this House. I know that he has

worked well with his colleagues on the other side of the House in dealing with various pieces of legislation.

So I look forward with anticipation to the debate as it carries on. I know that there will be a lead that will take place by the Progressive Conservative Party, which will have its opportunity to provide its views on this legislation, and then by the New Democratic Party. I know that all of us will look forward not only to the leads but, perhaps, to the other contributions that are made. I would be very surprised if my friend from Welland—as well as others, but my friend from Welland always says this—would not anticipate and look forward to some time in committee, because he always says that. So I simply anticipate that he says that.

Sometimes matters can be resolved completely within the House, and committee is not necessary. That is rarely the case. I think certainly our government has endeavoured to send things to committee. It's not always as long or as extensive as my friends in opposition might like from time to time, but we have recognized the importance of that where the House deems that to be important.

So with those remarks, I would move the adjournment of the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): The minister has moved adjournment of the debate. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Thank you.

Second reading debate adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We have no further business this morning, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Thank you. With that, this House stands recessed until 10:30 of the clock.

The House recessed from 0941 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would like to welcome a group of Sheridan College journalism and media arts students who are in the press gallery today and will be in the Speaker's gallery as well, from Sheridan in Oakville. It's a pleasure to welcome them.

From my riding of Elgin–Middlesex–London, I'd like to welcome Mary Jane and Jerry Collins, seated in the Speaker's gallery. Mary Jane was the greatest grade 6 teacher ever in the history of Edward Street school. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Ted Arnott: I would like to introduce a former member of the Legislature, the former member from Mississauga South, Tim Peterson.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Yes, we do welcome the honourable member who represented Mississauga South in the 38th Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I'd like to give the pages an opportunity to prepare for introduction, please.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

I would like to ask all members to join me in welcoming this group of legislative pages serving in the second session of the 39th Parliament: Kiruthika Baskaran, Windsor West; Madelaine Brown, Brant; Grace Conroy, Prince Edward–Hastings; Christopher DeGuzman, Mississauga East–Cooksville; Fatemah Ebrahim, Thornhill; Cherechi Emenogu, Mississauga–Brampton South; Logan Emiry, Algoma–Manitoulin; Jia Jia Ho, Willowdale; Devon Jones, Don Valley East; Daniel Mateus, St. Catharines; Riley McPhail, York–Simcoe; Sydney O’Brien, Halton; Travis Poland, Sarnia–Lambton; Emma Redfearn, Lambton–Kent–Middlesex; Gemma Ricker, Haldimand–Norfolk; Devan Scholefield, Etobicoke–Lakeshore; Rafeh Shahzad, Brampton West; Ciaran Thomas, St. Paul’s; Jimmy Zhou, Mississauga–Erindale; and Leighton Zink, Kitchener–Waterloo. Welcome to our pages.

Please reassemble.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Tim Hudak: The question is to the Minister of Energy. Minister, do you still have confidence in the bloated hydro bureaucracy known as the Ontario Power Authority?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I can understand why the Tories, yesterday and today, want to talk about the Ontario Power Authority. It’s an organization—I think that they don’t support the work that this organization does. They don’t support the efforts that this organization is making to help get us out of coal. They don’t support the efforts that this organization is making to help provide a more reliable energy system across this province. They don’t support the work that this organization is doing to create thousands of clean energy jobs across this country.

It’s pretty obvious that that party doesn’t want to come forward with their energy plan because their energy plan would kill the thousands of jobs that we’re creating in our clean energy economy. Their energy plan would blunt our efforts to get out of dirty coal by 2014. Yes, the Ontario Power Authority has an important role to play—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Well, Minister, of course not: No, we do not support the Ontario Power Authority. Minister, we support the hard-working Ontario families and small businesses who are sick and tired of getting higher and higher hydro bills because of the expensive mess you’ve made in our system.

When Premier McGuinty first announced the Ontario Power Authority in 2004, your government said, “There’s been a misconception that this is somehow going to be a massive bureaucracy.” Well, since then, the OPA bureau-

cracy has ballooned from 15 to 300 employees. Salaries and expenses have grown by a staggering 465%. Why don’t you do the right thing and scrap your bloated hydro bureaucracy?

Hon. Brad Duguid: What the Ontario Power Authority and all of our energy agencies here in this province are busy doing is turning around the ugly legacy that that Leader of the Opposition left behind when it comes to energy in this province. That means we’re working very hard to create more power generation in this province to ensure that we have enough power to reliably provide for the needs of Ontario families—something they did not do. That’s why we’re working very hard to get out of dirty coal by 2014, to ensure that we can provide a healthier future for our kids and grandkids—something that that party doesn’t seem to care about, something that that party doesn’t support. We’re also creating thousands of clean energy jobs.

Why does that leader not come forward with his energy plan to tell Ontario—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Clearly, the minister embraces his bloated Ontario Power Authority bureaucracy. Minister, we would take a very different view. We would close the doors on the OPA and pass on the savings to hard-pressed Ontario families.

You said this would not be a massive bureaucracy, but the costs have grown by 465%. I guess that is simply standard, everyday bloat when it comes to the McGuinty government. We think they’re doing a poor job.

In fact, if anything, we think the OPA should be called the Ontario propaganda authority for spending millions and millions of dollars in ads to promote the McGuinty government. The OPA played a role in their backtrack seat-savers in Oakville and the wind turbine backtrack to save your own seat.

Minister, why don’t you do the right thing? Scrap this wasteful bureaucracy—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: The last person we are going to take advice from when it comes to accountability is that Leader of the Opposition. He sat in the cabinet that allowed Hydro One to buy a yacht. I think they named it Defiant. He sat in the cabinet that allowed the Hydro One CEO, Eleanor Clitheroe, to earn \$2.2 million a year, half as much as Hydro One is currently involved in with regard to compensation in terms of executive compensation.

The fact of the matter is that the Ontario Power Authority is engaged in improving our conservation programs—something that that party doesn’t support—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Stop the clock, please.

I’m finding it extremely difficult. There are a number of ministers who are shouting down their own colleague, who is trying to answer a question. I would just remind

the Minister of Economic Development and the Minister of Finance of the importance of allowing their colleague to answer.

Continue.

Hon. Brad Duguid: The reason this party doesn't support the work of the Ontario Power Authority is that they don't support conservation, and that's an initiative that the Ontario Power Authority is working on. They don't support energy planning. That's why they don't want to come forward to Ontario families with their plan: because they don't have one—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

1040

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. Tim Hudak: Back to the Minister of Energy: We simply do not support the McGuinty government waste that is driving up hydro bills for Ontario families. You don't seem to get that. In fact, when the Premier created the OPA, which you fully embrace, he said that this so-called transitional agency “shouldn't add to the cost of the” hydro “bill.” We're as likely to believe that as his other zinger: that smart meters are going to save people money.

Nobody believes it, Minister. The jig is up. Look at the record of waste at the OPA: \$1 billion, potentially, for your flip-flop and backtrack on the Oakville gas plant; a \$1-billion tab for your smart meter tax machines that are driving up bills; and a \$1-billion tab to pay Quebec and the US to take excess hydro. This is a great example of McGuinty waste that has to go. Minister—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This Leader of the Opposition has been in his position for over 630 days. Not one of those days has he come forward to Ontario families with his plans for energy.

This is what their campaign director, Mark Spiro, had to say: “The only people who are demanding our policy at the moment in a booklet form, where it's simple”—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The member from Renfrew is speaking so loudly, he can't even hear me calling him to order.

Please continue.

Hon. Brad Duguid: Their campaign director had this to say: “The only people who are demanding our policy at the moment in a booklet form, where it's simple and easy and they don't have to do any work, (are journalists).” Then he went on to say that journalists need details of party policy documented because they are otherwise too lazy to discover them.

You're hiding your plan from the journalists around Queen's Park. You're hiding your plan from Ontario families. You're even hiding your plan from your own—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, this is what you just do not understand: Hydro bills are sitting there on the kitchen table for days and days on end. The hydro bill has now become “the” bill in the province of Ontario because it is skyrocketing from the McGuinty government waste and expensive energy experiments.

Look at some of the salaries you're paying at the OPA as well, while families struggle: \$120,000 a year for an office manager; over \$200,000 a year for something called an “executive advisor”; almost \$600,000 a year for the CEO. We have seen boondoggle after boondoggle after boondoggle; \$1 billion wasted on smart meter tax machines that are driving up the bills.

Premier McGuinty used to be against this stuff. He has changed. Close down this wasteful bureaucracy and pass on the savings to families through their hydro bills.

Hon. Brad Duguid: After over 630 days as Leader of the Opposition, I would suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that he take the advice of his energy critic, because this is what he had to say: “Ontario needs an energy plan and the leadership to see it through. Not having a ... plan is just wasting precious time.” I say to the Leader of the Opposition: Stop wasting the precious time of this Legislature. Stop wasting the precious time of Ontario families. Let them know where you stand.

There may be reasons why you don't want to do that. Maybe it's because you don't support our clean energy benefit that's taking 10% off their bills. Maybe it's because you don't support the thousands of clean energy jobs we're creating in communities right across this province. Maybe it's because you want to stay with dirty coal and not be out of coal by 2014. But Ontario families deserve to know where you stand. Why are you—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Final supplementary.

Mr. Tim Hudak: Minister, I told you where we stand. We would close the doors on your bloated OPA hydro bureaucracy and pass the savings on to Ontario families. Why don't you get that?

I know it's hard for you to admit that you made a grievous error. This thing has been a massive, wasteful bureaucracy, and their screw-ups are as long as the day. They screwed up on the smart meter tax machines; they're subsidizing exports to Quebec and New York state to the tune of \$1 billion. Let's get this straight: While Ontario families are paying more for their hydro, you're subsidizing customers in Quebec and New York state? Why is it that families would have to move across the border into Buffalo to find any kind of savings from the McGuinty government?

This has been a big mistake. It has driven up bills. It's not too late: Close down this wasteful bureaucracy and pass the money on to Ontario families.

Hon. Brad Duguid: This comes from a Leader of the Opposition who, in his last two years in office when he served in cabinet, had us import power because we weren't producing enough, and that cost Ontario rate-payers \$1 billion in their last two years. What does he know about managing an energy system? We're not

really sure, because he won't tell Ontario families what his plan is.

What about Ontario farmers? I think they deserve to know what your plan is because you have members in your caucus who are going around this province telling Ontario farmers that you're going to kill the energy policies that are helping those farmers out, that are helping those farmers engage in our clean energy economy, that are helping to provide up to \$10,000 for Ontario farmers.

Come clean with Ontario farmers. Come clean with Ontario families. Come clean with Ontario businesses—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you.

Stop the clock.

One of the reasons that it's important to speak through the Chair is that when the Speaker does rise, you will see that he has risen, and that is your signal to sit down. I would just remind the honourable member that he needs to keep an eye on the Speaker.

New question.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. From Windsor to Thunder Bay, there's a lot of economic uncertainty out there and lots of anxiety. People are concerned about finding a job, about paying skyrocketing hydro bills, soaring gasoline prices and, now, higher costs for food. Will next week's budget actually give people a break?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What working families are looking for is better education and health care; they're looking for a clean, reliable system of energy; and they're looking for a range of opportunities for their children and their parents that will build on a quality of life that is second to none in the world right here in Ontario.

The policies we will lay out in the budget are designed to recognize the fact that our economy is turning the corner, and what we have an obligation to do is to work with all families to build a better future for Ontarians, to ensure that, as we get the budget back to balance, there are more new jobs, better health care and better education for all Ontarians.

I look forward to presenting the budget next week to lay out a clear plan for a better future for our children and grandchildren.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Next week's budget needs to focus on family budgets, not corporate budgets. Household debt loads are at historic highs, and the recession has forced many to take lower-paying jobs.

Will the Acting Premier give families a break and take the HST off of home heating bills?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Families have had a number of breaks from this government. Let's talk about the Ontario child benefit: \$1.2 billion for Ontarians of modest incomes. That member and her party voted against it.

Let's talk about the lowest tax rate on the first \$37,000 of income in the country in the 2009 budget. It kicked in last year and it reduced taxes on the first \$37,000 by almost 20%. That member and her party voted against it.

Let's talk about the Ontario clean energy benefit, which lowers hydro bills, including taxes, by 10%, more than eliminating the HST would from those bills. That member and her party voted against it.

This party helps families. That member and her party vote against them, routinely.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Linda Guyle wrote to me about her utility bill. After explaining all the charges and every single step that she has taken to try to keep costs down, she writes: "It's time to give people a break instead of breaking people!"

Will the Acting Premier help family budgets by taking the HST off home heating bills? Or will he put corporate budgets ahead of families?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: There is one Ontarian I'd like to hear from later today, and that's Jack Layton. Will he vote for a federal budget that leaves the GST on hydro bills? I think that's an important question. Will he vote for a budget that continues corporate tax cuts? That's an important question that Ontarians want an answer to.

1050

Ontarians also want to know why it is that that leader and her party have voted against every tax credit for senior citizens that this government has brought forward. They have no plan other than to spend money they don't have.

We're going to get back to balance and make important investments in education and health care to build a better future for our children as the economy turns the corner. That's what we're about. We look forward to hearing from our friends opposite.

TAXATION

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My second question is also for the Acting Premier. Like Ontario's budget next week, today's federal budget is expected to contain another round of corporate tax cuts. Does the Acting Premier support Prime Minister Harper's corporate tax giveaways?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: Like all Canadians, I anxiously await the budget later this afternoon. I had an opportunity last evening to speak to the federal finance minister. We shared views on a variety of issues.

Canadians are waiting to see if the NDP federally will vote for those corporate tax cuts. It appears as though they're going to. The NDP—and they are one party; I remind them over there that it is one party—said initially they were going to oppose the corporate tax cuts, but that wasn't on the list they gave to the Prime Minister as must-have demands in order to support the government.

The leader of the third party doesn't have a plan other than to spend more money. We are going to make im-

portant investments in education, in health care and in children's services to build a better future as this economy turns the corner. It is about our children and grandchildren, and that's what we're focused on. She'll see what we have to say about all of these issues a week from today, right here.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Here are the words that Mr. Ignatieff and other Liberal MPs have used to describe corporate tax cuts: "reckless," "unaffordable," "economically and socially irresponsible" and "not the most effective way to create jobs."

Does the Acting Premier disagree with the position of his federal Liberal counterparts?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What we believe in is that, in order to keep jobs in Ontario, we compete against Alberta, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Her plan, her policies, will create jobs in British Columbia, they will create jobs in Alberta, they will create jobs in Saskatchewan, and they will create jobs in Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. This government—this party—wants those jobs right here in Ontario.

We have the best workforce. We have the best education system. We have the most productive economy. We have a bright future, and that's what we're about.

We're going to lay out a clear plan that strikes the balance, that says to Ontarians, "As this economy turns the corner, our children and grandchildren will have a better future because one party in this House has a clear vision and is prepared to enunciate it to the people of Ontario."

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Final supplementary.

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Family budgets need help right now. Corporate tax cuts won't help people pay their bills. Our manufacturing and forestry sectors are struggling, and corporate tax cuts will not help them either—unless, of course, they happen to be turning a profit.

People want to see jobs and help with the growing cost of living. Why is the Acting Premier making life more expensive for families and offering tax giveaways to corporations that are laying people off?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The people of Ontario have needed help over the last two years, and do you know what? When we cut their taxes, she voted against it. When we created the seniors' energy and property tax credit and then doubled it, she voted against it. When we created the Ontario clean energy benefit to lower people's energy bills by 10%, she and her party voted against it.

I would like to remind her of what her colleague from Beaches–East York had to say last week: "I mean, the tax burden has gone down on everyone, in spite of what people think. You know, taxes have gone down, literally in all income groups."

Interjection: Who said that?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The member for Beaches–East York said that. He was right. Why did you vote against every initiative designed to help families across this

province? No plan, no idea, no future; better future, better plan—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

ENERGY POLICIES

Mr. John Yakabuski: We'll give the Minister of Finance a break. He's out of air. I'll pass this one to the Minister of Energy.

In May 2004, the rationale the McGuinty Liberals gave to Ontario families for creating the Ontario Power Authority was that the agency would produce a stable price for hydro, but the only thing it has produced is one hydro rate increase after another. Ontario families have already seen their bills go up by 75%—100% if you're using a smart meter—and you increased them by at least another 46%.

What makes you keep an agency around when it has failed so miserably in one of its stated mandates, and that's to keep the hydro bill down? Why would you keep it around?

Hon. Brad Duguid: If that member was really concerned about the budgets of Ontario families, why would you not have supported our clean energy benefit that's taken 10% off their bills? Why did you vote against that? Ontario families, farmers and small businesses deserve that 10% off their bills. You voted against that.

If that member really cares about Ontario families, why would he not want to ensure that we have cleaner air for our kids by getting rid of dirty coal by 2014? Why are you and your colleagues still in favour of letting coal churn out across this province, continuing to pollute our air and impacting the health of ourselves and our kids?

If you really cared about Ontario families, how can you stand up today and not support the efforts that we're making to clean our air, to create jobs and to build a reliable—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. John Yakabuski: Premier McGuinty used to complain about renovations to a boardroom at hydro offices being added to the bills at a time when rates were going up by 30%. But you see, that was before he increased them by 75%; 100% if you have a smart meter installed, a smart tax machine. It was before he planned to increase them by another 46%, and it was before—and I love this one; this is great—the OPA was in the process of hiring a hospitality service executive, until the Ontario PC caucus caught them in the act.

Premier McGuinty has taken his eye off the ball. He has made a mess of Ontario's electricity system, and consumers are paying. Why won't you give consumers and Ontario families the relief and spare them from paying any more for your bloated OPA—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Brad Duguid: This comes from the PC Party, a party that, when they had control of Hydro One, bought a

yacht and they named it Defiant; a party that had CEO Eleanor Clitheroe making double what the CEO today makes at Hydro One. Unbelievably, they removed Hydro One and OPG from being subject to freedom of information. What did they have to hide?

There's a list this long of Tory operatives who benefited in those days. Those days are gone. We've cleaned up the Tory mess that they left behind. Our organizations are accountable; they're doing important work and building a clean, reliable and modern energy system, something they don't support. They don't want to talk about their plan today. They haven't wanted to talk about their plan since their leader became—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question?

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Mr. Peter Tabuns: My question is to the Minister of Energy. Public hearings on plans for a new nuclear plant at Darlington began yesterday. Is the Ministry of Energy fully participating in the public hearings and open to answering all questions that concerned community members may have?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I've been in touch with my federal colleagues on this matter and I've written, as the Premier indicated to the House yesterday, to my federal colleagues, encouraging them to ensure that any lessons learned from the Japanese experience are applied in this federal environmental assessment process.

This federal environmental assessment process is the highest level of environmental assessment in the country. The panel is indeed meeting and holding open public consultations. They are hearing from anybody who wants to speak to them. I think it's an important part of the accountability, as we move forward with the purchase of two new nuclear units, that we allow the federal government to work through this process.

1100

We welcome input from the member opposite. We welcome input from all families and people in Ontario, and all organizations. Certainly, that—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Peter Tabuns: The minister may or may not welcome input, but he certainly doesn't welcome questions.

On January 13, 2011, Peter Landmann, counsel for the Ministry of Energy, wrote to the panel confirming special treatment for the ministry. This letter indicates that community members and groups can only ask questions to the Ministry of Energy "with the consent of" the ministry, and that "no cross-examination ... will be permitted."

Why is the Ministry of Energy actively seeking to avoid questions from concerned community members and thus undermining those public hearings?

Hon. Brad Duguid: We don't avoid questions from anybody, and I think I'm up on my feet enough in this Legislature that the member would know that.

But what I would say is this: We take very seriously the need to ensure that we continue to learn from the experiences of others around the world, but I think the member would want to be on his feet on a continual basis to reassure his constituents that here in Ontario our nuclear units are safe. They continue to be safe. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission oversees that and ensures that that takes place.

The hearings that are ongoing are a very important part of our process. This is the beginning of a very long process that's going to take place. There's a number of approvals that will be necessary. There will be a lot of time for consideration of all the issues that are involved here, but the key is that our units are safe today and our units will be safe in the future.

WATER SUPPLY

Mr. Rick Johnson: My question is for the Minister of the Environment. Minister, Ontario families know a sustainable water source is vital to our well-being and our way of life. A great deal of the world's fresh water is found right here in our backyard in the Great Lakes. A key plank of the Open Ontario act is to ensure that Ontario becomes a centre of excellence in developing technology for clean water. Some residents in my riding want to make sure that any economic development does not come at the expense of this valuable resource.

My question is simple: Will the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act actually improve water conservation in Ontario?

Hon. John Wilkinson: I want to thank my colleague for the question. On this side of the House, we don't believe that it's a question of the economy versus the environment, but it's a question of finding the balance between the economy and the environment. I'd like to say today, on World Water Day, how important it is that we on this planet find that balance. That's why right around the world we are celebrating World Water Day.

Let me assure Ontarians of one thing: When it comes to our Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act, it's about exporting our clean water technology, not about exporting our precious resource, water. We live in a world that is increasingly thirsty. There are estimates that within 15 years, 1.8 billion people on this planet will not have a source of safe drinking water, so we see tremendous opportunity here in the province of Ontario to export that technology so that people around the world can have that most precious resource which all life depends on, which is water.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Rick Johnson: It is estimated that the global market for water technology is more than \$400 billion US per year and doubling every five to six years. In the next 20 years, worldwide demand for water is expected to be 40% greater than current supply. There are companies throughout Ontario that have expertise in water technologies and would like the support of your ministry to ensure they have the resources to turn into global com-

panies. By your ministry supporting these companies, we will be seeing more knowledge-based jobs for Ontarians.

Furthermore, by helping build expertise in Ontario, we will be able to export our technologies to help other countries conserve water. Will the minister tell us what supports there will be for these high-growth water technology companies in my riding?

Hon. John Wilkinson: To the Minister of Research and Innovation.

Hon. Glen R. Murray: Just weeks ago, thanks to the good efforts of the member from Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock, I met with delegations from the cities of Kawartha Lakes and Peterborough and was impressed by their historic and ongoing efforts to build water technology and advance it.

As members may know, at Fleming College, Dr. Brent Wootton of the Centre for Alternative Wastewater Treatment is helping Canadian companies become more competitive by extracting the value from what was previously considered waste water.

Good news travels fast, and in London, Ontario, Trojan has just added 119 jobs to Ontario—in one of our largest expansions—my ministry will be launching WaterTAP, an industry-led association to accelerate water development.

This is a critically growing area. Right now, Ontario is home to 2,800—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

COMPENSATION FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME

Mr. Jim Wilson: To the Acting Premier: Yesterday, Premier McGuinty said that parents who were denied support because they hadn't witnessed the murder of their children can expect changes to his broken victims-of-crime program, but Ontario families have heard it all before from this Premier.

In 2006, he said he would fix the problem after the Ombudsman described how Mr. Aurelio Almeida was treated like a con artist for seeking support following the rape and murder of his five-year-old daughter. Eva-Marie Devine had to choose between food and burying her murdered daughter. In 2008, the Premier said he would fix the problem after getting advice from the Honourable Roy McMurtry.

It's 2011 and nothing's changed, not even your briefing notes. So I say to the Acting Premier: Can you tell grieving families why they should believe a Premier who broke his promise to them twice already?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

Hon. James J. Bradley: On behalf of the Attorney General, I say that you'll recall the answers of the Attorney General and the Premier in the House indicating clearly that a review of this matter was taking place.

I think what's important, and the member would agree with me, is to state how much money has been allocated

in this regard. Since 2003, the Ministry of the Attorney General has provided \$757.6 million on vital services for victims of crime. In 2010-11, there has been an allocation of an additional—I say “an additional”—\$120 million. This is almost double the amount that was allocated in 2002-03, the last year of the previous government. So we've seen a significant and substantial increase—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, another review isn't needed. You went out and got advice twice already on Premier McGuinty's broken victim compensation program, even though there's no mystery to what the problem is or how to fix it: Take the surplus you're sitting on in the victims' fund and release it to victims and law enforcement agencies; change the definition of “victim” so it includes parents, whether or not they witnessed the crimes committed against their children; and add victim compensation representation to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Despite having already received advice from both the Ombudsman and the Honourable Roy McMurtry, you're stonewalling victims by asking the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board for yet a third opinion.

Minister, what is Premier McGuinty's timeline for action that actually gives relief to Ontario families who are victims of crime?

Hon. James J. Bradley: I think the—

Interjection.

Hon. James J. Bradley: The member for Lanark interjects. I'm worried about what's happening in eastern Ontario, about what the member for Lanark is trying to do to the member for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I would just remind the minister to stay on the point of the question, please.

Hon. James J. Bradley: I'm being interrupted by the member for Lanark and I was trying to help the member for Mississippi Mills.

May I say to the member that I know comparisons are useful because it's a clear indication of whether people are talking the talk or walking the walk. I want to indicate to him—and I'm not being critical of the past—that the present government has allocated more than three times as much from the victims' justice fund as the previous Conservative government did. The Premier is asking for immediate action in this regard, as is the Attorney General. We believe it is a serious situation and we're—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question?

POVERTY

Mr. Michael Prue: My question is to the Acting Premier. Can the Acting Premier tell this House why 400,000 Ontarians are forced to rely on food banks?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: The government of Ontario, working with other governments, has constructed an anti-

poverty strategy where, for the first time, not only do we measure the challenges to poverty, we are setting targets for better outcomes. There is always more to do on this front. As long as one Ontario family has to turn to a food bank, that's too many.

We will continue to build on the progress we have made in terms of enhancements to various programs and services that are designed to help those of more modest means, and we look forward, as the economy improves—and it is improving—to all Ontarians sharing in the benefits of a faster-growing economy with more jobs, better outcomes and better opportunities for our children.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?
1110

Mr. Michael Prue: The Ontario food bank association report shows, first, that food bank usage has increased in Ontario by 28% since 2008, which is, coincidentally, the same year that this government announced its poverty reduction strategy. Ontario ranks third-highest for food bank usage in all of Canada.

This is the government strategy. This is the government legacy. This is the government poverty production plan—that's what it is: It's a poverty production plan. Can you tell us again what a good job you are doing?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: I'd rather rely on the food banks themselves to tell you the job we're doing. They supported our tax plan for jobs and growth because they recognized that it was in fact a plan about lowering the tax burden on the most vulnerable in this society. It was about creating opportunity. That's why groups like the Daily Bread Food Bank and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives supported this initiative as being extremely important for relieving poverty in this province.

We have laid out a plan. It's been endorsed by those food banks. It's taken 90,000 low-income Ontarians off the tax rolls. It's lowered taxes for the lowest-income earners in Ontario.

That member and his party are trying to have it both ways. They vote against it, offer nothing substantive in return. This government has a plan and a policy that's working for all Ontarians.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Mrs. Liz Sandals: My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

I'm very concerned with a recent poll released by the Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations and the Canadian Federation of Students on university education over the last eight years. I'm very discouraged to see that the poll results found that nearly half of respondents believe the quality of post-secondary education has stayed the same since 2003, and only 8% said that education had improved. The poll also indicates that respondents think that post-secondary education will be a top priority in the coming election.

As we all know, a post-secondary education has become essential for Ontarians to compete in our knowledge-based economy. Minister, what is the govern-

ment doing to ensure that post-secondary education remains a top priority for—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. John Milloy: I'm very pleased to comment on the poll, which asked people to compare our record with the record of the previous government. I'd like to remind members of the House about the record of the previous government—the fact that they cut over \$400 million from our colleges and universities; the fact that they allowed tuition to increase by 67%; and they cut student financial aid by 40%.

We came to office, and by investing billions of dollars into the system, I'm very pleased to say that we have the highest post-secondary attainment rate in the western world here in Ontario. On the university front, we have the highest participation rate. We have one of the most generous financial aid systems in the country, the lowest default rate on student loans and an increased graduation rate in both our colleges and universities.

In seven years, I'm—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mrs. Liz Sandals: Students know they need to obtain a good education in order to compete in today's high-skills economy. However, there are still many people who feel that post-secondary institutions have become too expensive.

I've heard concerns from the University of Guelph about the cost for students from middle-income families, and students who have never had a family member at university may not know what assistance is available. My fear is that potential students will be discouraged from applying to our universities because they don't think they can afford it, and the debt they could accumulate might be too high.

I know Ontario offers some of the best universities and colleges in the country; I've got one in Guelph. What is the government doing to limit tuition fees and keep post-secondary education affordable?

Hon. John Milloy: As I mentioned, independent experts have told us that we have one of the most generous student financial aid systems in the country. Through the Reaching Higher plan, we put forward \$1.5 billion in additional funding for student aid. We've seen 140,000 more college and university students enter into the system.

Last spring, we announced further changes to OSAP, some \$81 million to make it more generous, to allow more students to access it and, at the same time, to bring in measures like the repayment assistance plan, which allows students who have some financial difficulties after graduation to see their loan payments reduced to match their income.

I am very proud of the progress that we've made in terms of student aid in this province, and we can say that no qualified student in this province will ever be denied access to college or university because of financial reasons.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Sylvia Jones: My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. Minister, last fall, the residents of Shelburne and north Dufferin were promised that a health and wellness centre would be created in Shelburne, offering a broad range of community-based care. Shelburne council, with the support of the county of Dufferin, is currently working on a proposal that would see the health and wellness centre located at the Shelburne closed hospital. Minister, will you consider this proposal from the county of Dufferin?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: Thank you to the member for this question. What I can tell you is this is an issue that the local health integration network is working on. We of course are committed to improving health care in the area of Shelburne and right across this province.

We've made significant investments at Headwaters. We've increased funding by close to 30%. That's in stark contrast to what the Progressive Conservative Party did when they were in government; they actually cut funding to Headwaters by 4%.

We've also invested over \$1 million in reducing wait times for people in the Shelburne area, at Headwaters, and we've seen results. Cataract surgeries have been reduced by 43% and cancer surgery wait times have been reduced by an astonishing—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Sylvia Jones: Minister, your answer concerns me greatly. The LHINs have actually directed the new executive director in fact not to speak to the mayor of the town of Shelburne or the county of Dufferin. They are refusing to consider this site.

Minister, the residents in my community would like to see this closed Shelburne site continue to be served and to be used as a community health asset. We're looking for a concrete plan with a time frame for the creation of this health and wellness centre.

The board of Headwaters Health Care Centre has determined that the Shelburne site is surplus to their needs. Subsection 4(4) of the Public Hospitals Act indicates that ministerial—not LHIN—approval is required for the disposition of hospital buildings and land.

Minister, will you—not the LHIN—commit—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Minister?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: As the member has said, this particular site is no longer used as a hospital. It is a surplus hospital site. The hospital has made the decision and they are working with the municipality to work out what arrangements can be made.

I think it's important to emphasize, though, that this is an issue that needs to be worked out at the local level, and we have never refused a request to approve the sale of any hospital site.

I would recommend that the member opposite continue to work in her community to find a resolution to this.

NUCLEAR WASTE

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My question is to the Acting Premier. Today is World Water Day. It should be a day to celebrate progress in protecting water. Instead, the Anishinabek Nation and others are launching a campaign to try to stop an imminent threat to the Great Lakes: a proposal by Bruce Power to transport radioactive nuclear steam generators across the Great Lakes system.

Will the McGuinty government finally speak up and oppose this unnecessary risk to a source of drinking water for 40 million people?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: To the Minister of Energy.

Hon. Brad Duguid: We've talked about this issue in the past and we've dealt with this issue here. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has held hearings on this particular matter, heard from a number of different stakeholders and, I believe, heard directly from First Nations as well on this. They're the experts on these matters. They determine, indeed, what needs to be done, what's safe and what's not safe in terms of our waterways when it comes to nuclear and the transportation of potentially radioactive material. They've done their job. They've made their decision.

1120

There's still more work to be done because there are other jurisdictions now that are undergoing consideration of this matter. But those public hearings have been held and the Leader of the Opposition had an opportunity to make input and, to the best of my knowledge, she failed to take advantage of that.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: The McGuinty government says it's safe to ship these massive containers, even though radiation levels exceed international standards and there's been no environmental assessment of the plan and environmental groups, mayors and aboriginal communities all oppose the plan.

Why won't the government, on World Water Day, of all days, stand up for our shared waters and finally stop this shipment?

Hon. Brad Duguid: I've shared with this Legislature in the past, and I will again as Minister of Energy for the province of Ontario, that certainly I wrote to Bruce Power and I wrote to my federal colleagues urging them to ensure that every last stone was unturned with regard to the consideration of safety on this particular issue.

I've been assured that indeed that is what has taken place. The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission has done their job as the experts they are in these particular matters.

I also encouraged at that time the Leader of the Opposition to in fact make a deputation and indeed make her views known, but she failed to do that. Those hearings have been held; the decision has been made. There's still work to do in terms of other jurisdictions with regard to this shipment, but the leader had her opportunity and she failed to take advantage of it. I can't help her with that now.

SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Ma question s'adresse à la ministre des Transports. Cette Assemblée législative sait à quel point il est important que nous, membres du présent gouvernement, trouvions des services d'expression française en Ontario. Depuis l'adoption de la Loi sur les services en français de 1986, notre province a déployé des efforts pour offrir des services d'expression française. En termes de plaques d'immatriculation, notre gouvernement est celui qui a introduit la version française de « Yours to discover »—« Tant à découvrir »—en 2008.

À l'occasion de la Semaine de la francophonie, la ministre aurait-elle l'obligeance de nous fournir une mise à jour sur la manière dont les divers types de plaques d'immatriculation sont disponibles dans les deux langues du Canada?

L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell ne fait pas erreur. En 2008, nous avons introduit la version française de « Yours to discover », soit « Tant à découvrir. »

Je suis heureuse de signaler que, en date de janvier 2011, environ 5 166 plaques d'immatriculation de véhicules de transport-passagers arborant le slogan en français ont été délivrées.

Nous avons aussi grandement élargi la palette de versions françaises disponibles sur nos plaques anglaises. Par exemple, depuis sa mise en circulation en 2007, nous offrons le slogan graphique en français de la Société canadienne du sang, soit « Donnez du sang ». Le 1^{er} juillet 2010, le ministère a introduit une nouvelle plaque verte pour les véhicules électriques qui est disponible—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde: Merci, madame la Ministre. Je dois tout d'abord la féliciter, à l'occasion de la Semaine de la francophonie, d'avoir si bien répondu en français, pour la réponse et pour l'amélioration de ces services à la population francophone de l'Ontario.

Un aspect que vous n'avez pas mentionné est la question que j'ai entendue de mes commentants d'expression française. Malgré les pas de géant que nous avons marqués, il semblerait que le slogan en français « Tant à découvrir » ne soit pas disponible sur les plaques d'immatriculation personnalisées.

Est-ce que la ministre peut nous expliquer pourquoi le slogan n'est pas disponible et quelles sont les mesures qu'on prévoit adopter pour s'assurer d'y offrir un accès équitable à notre population d'expression française en Ontario?

L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne: Je souhaite remercier le député de Glengarry–Prescott–Russell pour sa vigoureuse défense de cet enjeu de taille.

Notre gouvernement est résolu à aménager une collectivité francophone saine et prospère. Nous avons investi des sommes importantes dans des secteurs clés comme l'éducation, la santé et la culture. À titre de

gouvernement, nous nous employons à améliorer l'accès aux services du gouvernement provincial en français et la qualité des services, et nous continuerons d'explorer de nouvelles façons de promouvoir la langue et la culture françaises aux niveaux local, national et international.

Mon collègue soulève une question très importante. J'ai demandé au personnel du ministère des Transports de l'Ontario d'explorer des façons d'offrir cet important service en matière de plaques personnalisées—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. New question.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, last week, I toured the Collingwood General and Marine Hospital to check on the dialysis unit which, as you know, has a waiting list of eight patients. Because of your government's delay in approving the funding, patients now have to travel either to Barrie or Orillia for this life-saving treatment.

While touring the hospital, I learned of an even greater crisis: The hospital is bursting at the seams. Even if you help to eliminate some of the current backlog by approving the funding, if any further patients come along, there will be no room to provide them with dialysis services locally.

The hospital has had a capital expansion application in to your ministry since 2004, but you've ignored them for seven years. Minister, why have you overlooked the needs of patients in southern Georgian Bay who rely on the Collingwood hospital?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: I am more than happy to talk about what we have done to improve health care infrastructure in this province. The reality is that when we came to office in 2003, we inherited an extraordinary deficit in our hospital infrastructure, so we rolled up our sleeves and we went to work. We have now built 18 brand new hospitals and embarked on major capital projects at 100 more. Our commitment to improving the infrastructure is undeniable, and the evidence is in the hospitals that are opening right across this province.

Is there more to do? Yes, there is more to do. We've made a significant dent in that infrastructure deficit, but there is more to do. We are determined to come back to this House and continue to improve infrastructure.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim Wilson: Minister, your government had no problem approving a remodel of the CEO's office at the Central West Community Care Access Centre into an executive suite that cost taxpayers \$400,000. You have no problem spending money on bureaucracy, but turn to patient care and you're broke.

Patients in Collingwood are lying in the hallway. Administrative offices at CCACs and LHINs have no hemodialysis machines, they don't perform any surgeries and they can't take your blood or repair a broken arm. If you don't act quickly, there will be no additional access to dialysis services in Collingwood.

The hospital needs your approval so they can get going on building a new wing for ambulatory care and dialysis, which would also allow them to expand the emergency room. Minister, when will you be approving the expansion of Collingwood General and Marine Hospital?

Hon. Deborah Matthews: This is simply an astonishing question coming from this particular member of the opposition. This member was the Minister of Health. He was the one who got the hospital restructuring commission rolling. He's the one who's responsible for the closure of 28 hospitals.

Let me look at the record of this particular riding. The Stevenson Memorial Hospital had their budget cut by almost 6%. That hurt families. The General Marine Hospital in Collingwood: They cut almost 10% from the hospital budget there. In stark contrast, we have been investing more and more in hospitals right across this province. At Stevenson Memorial, it's 34% more; in Collingwood, there's a 45% increase in spending. We are committed to continue improving.

They want to cut health care. There is no way you can cut health care and improve services. We are on the side of the patients of this province.

1130

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question is for the Acting Premier, and it's very simple: Can the Acting Premier tell this House how many strikes or lockouts are using temporary replacement workers right now?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: What I can tell the member opposite is that Ontario has enjoyed unprecedented labour stability in the last eight years. What I can tell her is, unlike her party, which unilaterally opened up and stripped collective agreements, that's not something this government has ever done. She forgets the social contract, where they turned on their friends in the labour movement, took their contracts and tore them up, just like that.

This government works co-operatively with labour. This government works co-operatively with business. It is about building a better economy for our children, about better health care and better education and working with labour, because they're an important part of this province's future.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Supplementary?

M^{me} France Gélinas: My question was about temporary replacement workers, and the minister couldn't have answered it because the government does not keep track of the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or a lockout.

In my riding, the people at Vale Inco walked the picket line for a year while replacement workers were being used. In Brantford, workers at Engineering Coated Products have been asked to take a huge concession. They went on strike. The company brought in replacement workers. That was two and a half years ago. Those

people have been on strike for two and a half years while temporary replacement workers do their work.

The use of replacement workers during strikes and lockouts is growing exponentially in Ontario. It is tearing communities apart. It is prolonging labour disputes. How can the government get a picture of the use of replacement workers when it does not even keep track of it? Is it because they don't care about the health of those communities?

Hon. Dwight Duncan: This government continues to support collective bargaining, free and open. The labour movement and working Ontarians remember what that member and her party did once they came to office. They asked questions like this for decades before they came to office. What did they do? They opened and stripped every collective agreement, so they have no credibility.

What is important is that we work with labour and we work with business. Our economy is turning the corner, and it's turning a corner to a better future. That better future will be enhanced by the kinds of investments we're making in education and health care, which will build a productive, more healthy economy, will create jobs for our children and their children. It's about working together.

We're proud of our record in working with labour, in working with management. We look forward to that better future for our children and our grandchildren.

CHILD POVERTY

Mr. Bob Delaney: This question is for the Minister of Children and Youth Services. Minister, today the Ontario Association of Food Banks released a report called *Running on Empty*, which calls on Ontario's political parties to make hunger reduction a central priority.

In western Mississauga, the Eden Community Food Bank has served more people through its facilities in Meadowvale since the global economic downturn. The *Running on Empty* report asserts that, even as our province recovers from the recession, more than 400,000 Ontarians turn to food banks each month.

Minister, Ontarians need to know how our province will aggressively pursue our target of reducing child poverty by 25% within five years. How have Ontario's investments made a difference to those who have been using community food banks in this province?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I want to thank the member from Mississauga–Streetsville for the question and his advocacy for his community on this important issue.

I also want to thank the Ontario Association of Food Banks and the anti-hunger advocates in Toronto. This report, released by the Ontario Association of Food Banks, recognizes that, like other jurisdictions, Ontario is recovering from a global economic recession, and that Ontario's poverty reduction strategy, the first in our province's history, set a target to reduce child poverty by 25% by 2013.

Like other jurisdictions, we know that poverty is unacceptable, and we continue to work on that important

goal. Ontarians need to know that the report also recognizes that investments like the Ontario child benefit, full-day kindergarten and seven increases in the minimum wage have made incredibly important progresses—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. Supplementary?

Mr. Bob Delaney: Minister, the Running on Empty report highlights that the number of children and youth under 18 using food banks has declined since 2000.

In western Mississauga, the local student nutrition program received nearly \$2 million to deliver healthy meals and snacks to students across the riding. That means that when I visit students in their classrooms in Meadowvale, Lisgar and Streetsville schools, our kids are focusing on their lessons and are ready to learn. We know that healthy meals and snacks can help children to focus in school and to be ready to learn.

Minister, the NDP has claimed that our government is not doing enough for low-income Ontarians, despite their having voted against the child benefits. Minister, how many kids are benefiting from Ontario's investments in student nutrition?

Hon. Laurel C. Broten: I recently had the opportunity to attend, with my colleague and seatmate Minister Mitchell, Thorncliffe Park Public School in Don Valley West, where we celebrated the big crunch, and we talked a lot about our student nutrition programs.

I was able to tell those students—and I'm pleased to tell the House today—that 600,000 students are getting healthy breakfasts and snacks in school, thanks to our student nutrition program, and that's working out to 68 million snacks and meals last year. Here in Toronto, the student nutrition program served more than 15.2 million meals to more than 137,000 kids during that time.

Reducing poverty isn't about politics or partisanship. It's about having a plan. It's about executing that plan and working together to provide the opportunity for people to meet their full potential.

We continue to look for a partner in the federal government, and today's federal budget will provide, perhaps, an—

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Thank you. The time for question period has ended.

DEFERRED VOTES

ONTARIO FOREST TENURE MODERNIZATION ACT, 2011

LOI DE 2011 SUR LA MODERNISATION DU RÉGIME DE TENURE FORESTIÈRE EN ONTARIO

Deferred vote on the motion for second reading of Bill 151, An Act to enact the Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011 and to amend the Crown Forest Sustainability Act, 1994 / Projet de loi 151, Loi édictant la

Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario et modifiant la Loi de 1994 sur la durabilité des forêts de la Couronne.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Call in the members. This will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1136 to 1141.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): On March 2, 2011, Mr. Gravelle moved second reading of Bill 151. All those in favour will rise one at a time and be recorded by the Clerk.

Ayes

Albanese, Laura	Duncan, Dwight	Mitchell, Carol
Balkissoon, Bas	Flynn, Kevin Daniel	Moridi, Reza
Bartolucci, Rick	Fonseca, Peter	Naqvi, Yasir
Berardinetti, Lorenzo	Gerretsen, John	Oraziotti, David
Best, Margaret	Hoskins, Eric	Phillips, Gerry
Bradley, James J.	Hoy, Pat	Pupatello, Sandra
Broten, Laurel C.	Jaczek, Helena	Ramal, Khalil
Brown, Michael A.	Jeffrey, Linda	Ramsay, David
Cansfield, Donna H.	Johnson, Rick	Rinaldi, Lou
Caplan, David	Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Ruprecht, Tony
Chan, Michael	Levac, Dave	Sandals, Liz
Chiarelli, Bob	Mangat, Amrit	Smith, Monique
Colle, Mike	Matthews, Deborah	Takhar, Harinder S.
Craitor, Kim	Mauro, Bill	Van Bommel, Maria
Crozier, Bruce	McMeekin, Ted	Wilkinson, John
Delaney, Bob	McNeely, Phil	Wynne, Kathleen O.
Dickson, Joe	Meilleur, Madeleine	
Duguid, Brad	Milloy, John	

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Those opposed?

Nays

Arnott, Ted	Hillier, Randy	Murdoch, Bill
Bailey, Robert	Hudak, Tim	Prue, Michael
Barrett, Toby	Jones, Sylvia	Savoline, Joyce
Bisson, Gilles	Klees, Frank	Shurman, Peter
Chudleigh, Ted	Kormos, Peter	Tabuns, Peter
Clark, Steve	MacLeod, Lisa	Wilson, Jim
Gélinas, France	Martiniuk, Gerry	Witmer, Elizabeth
Hampton, Howard	Miller, Norm	Yakabuski, John
Hardeman, Ernie	Munro, Julia	

The Clerk of the Assembly (Ms. Deborah Deller): The ayes are 52; the nays are 26.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I would ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on General Government.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): So ordered.

There being no further deferred votes, this House stands recessed until 3 p.m. this afternoon.

The House recessed from 1145 to 1500.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): For the information of the members and staff within the building, there was a fire alarm that was triggered on the fourth floor of the north wing. Security was there. Toronto Fire Services has been on-site, and there is no fire. We have received an all-clear.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

OXFORD BUSINESSES

Mr. Ernie Hardeman: Recently, I conducted a survey of Oxford businesses, and I want to thank all the people who took time to share their thoughts and the challenges they are facing. Today, I'm pleased to rise and share their concerns.

While the economic climate has improved somewhat since the last survey, most businesses are still cautious and many of them expressed concerns about the cost of doing business in Ontario. Eighty-seven per cent of businesses reported that, based on the level of services they receive, taxes are too high. They varied on the tax cuts they believe would help their businesses most, but the top two were payroll taxes and a reduction in the HST.

That isn't the only cost that's too high. Ninety-five per cent of businesses reported that they have been impacted by the increasing cost of hydro, and 60% of those businesses said that the impact was significant. It is the same story that we are hearing from families.

I asked people to identify the biggest challenges their business is facing, and the most frequent response was government red tape. When asked to identify the biggest issue with government red tape, 21% said confusing forms, 39% said too much paperwork and 40% said difficulty finding out rules and regulations.

A few weeks ago, I asked the Premier about an internal document that showed this government is hiding red tape rather than cutting it. I hope that this government will listen to the results of this survey and realize that our businesses need action, not just a public relations exercise.

JOYCE BURNELL

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn: It's with sadness today that I rise in the Legislature. Last week, Oakville said good-bye to one of our community's most inspirational leaders, Joyce Burnell, who passed away in her 91st year.

One of her friends remarked recently that Joyce devoted her entire life to the Oakville community, and I fully agree with that statement. She taught elementary school in town, and she volunteered at St. John's United Church, the Retired Women Teachers of Ontario and the Oakville Historical Society. She was recognized with the Community Spirit Award and the Senior Citizen of the Year Award.

She was an unstoppable force, and her volunteer work only increased as the years went by. In fact, she was most known for spearheading a campaign just a few years ago to save the 250-year-old Woodlands white oak tree on Bronte Road. Some people wanted the tree torn down, but Joyce mobilized the community and raised \$343,000 to reroute the road and save the tree.

Joyce is going to be fondly missed by many in our community. She was a true role model for old and young

alike. Every time I drive by the big oak tree on Bronte Road, I'm going to remember Joyce Burnell, and we all should, as an example of how a life should be lived.

KAYLA MADUK

Ms. Lisa MacLeod: Kayla Maduk is the daughter of James and Heather. She's a grade 9 student at John McCrae Secondary School. She's a Barrhaven resident. She is an athlete. As of two weeks ago, she is also a world champion.

Last week, Kayla Maduk made Barrhaven and Canada proud when she won gold and silver medals at the world championship of tae kwon do in New Zealand. Her coach, Steven LeGrow, is from Orléans, as my colleague across the way is also so happy to acknowledge. He operates Blackburn Tae Kwon-Do and won a bronze medal.

Steven and Kayla were two of only three from Ontario to represent Canada at those games. I must say I am very proud of Kayla, as we all are in Barrhaven, because she won the most medals on behalf of Canada.

Her mother said—and I want to quote this, because I think it speaks to all of us who are parents as to how much pride we have in our own children—"I can't tell you how proud I felt watching my little girl standing on the podium hearing the national anthem."

I want Heather and James to know that the people of Nepean-Carleton share their pride in their daughter. We are so proud of her hard work, her determination and, of course, her talent. We also want to thank Heather and James in this Legislature for being supportive and dedicated parents who have helped their daughter realize her dream, meet her goals, and achieve the status of world-class athlete.

To the whole Maduk family on Kayla's gold medal success: Congratulations for your win and thank you for sharing this moment of history with us.

GARY MALKOWSKI

Mr. Michael Prue: I rise again in this Legislature to salute the accomplishments of Gary Malkowski, who represented the riding of York East in the 35th Parliament from 1990 to 1995. On May 13, Gary will be awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters at Gallaudet University, from whence he graduated in the mid-1980s. He will also be the commencement speaker.

Gary is being recognized for his work with the Canadian Hearing Society, but more so, he is being recognized for the enormous work that he continues to do on behalf of the deaf and hard of hearing, and, indeed, on behalf of all Ontarians. He is involved in so many things, including setting up curricula for the Ministry of Education for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. He is on the ARCH Disability Law Centre advisory. He is part of Media Access Canada. He is in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Alliance. He is part of the city of Toronto

disabilities committee, Osgoode Hall Law School, and he is on numerous other boards around this province.

He has won all those awards, but I think the one that surely will mean a lot to him is the honour of his alma mater, as they recognize him with a doctorate of humane letters and as he speaks to the graduates at Gallaudet University as only he can.

NURSES

Mr. Kim Craiton: I'm pleased to rise and share with the House that last week I was delighted to be part of a service for 29 new graduating practical nursing students from Niagara College, who received their nursing pins.

This pinning ceremony signifies the official initiation into the brotherhood and sisterhood of nurses and is part of a time-honoured nursing school tradition. This ritual, I am told, can often be more personally meaningful than the graduating ceremony as it is rich in symbolism.

I can also tell you personally that constant care by a good nurse is just as important as a major operation by a surgeon. We are fortunate that 29 new nurses will be joining 31 more new nurses graduating later this spring to explore the many opportunities that a career in nursing in Niagara will provide them.

Speaking with the graduating nurses, I found out that while most of them already have job offers, they were delighted that the incentive and support from the McGuinty government would have provided them with guaranteed jobs upon graduation. These nurses tell me that this guarantee gave them the confidence to realize their dreams and enrol in Niagara College's excellent nursing program. We're better off because they did that.

I would ask the House to join me in congratulating these exceptionally talented nurses and wish them well in their new careers.

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I rise today to recognize two recent announcements by the Liberal government.

First, the changes to Christopher's Law will bring new reporting obligations to convicted sex offenders. While I think it's a step in the right direction, I still believe we can and should do more to keep an even closer watch over these heinous criminals.

Under the Change of Name Act, it is possible for sex offenders to avoid having their criminal past checked, and so it's possible to legally obtain a new name and assume a new life. Hypothetically speaking, this loophole means that convicted sexual predator Graham James, a former hockey coach convicted of sexually abusing young players, could have easily assumed a new life under a new name in Ontario, just as he was doing in Mexico until recently.

What I want is for Ontario to start using fingerprint technology to screen out people seeking a new name for unscrupulous reasons. My hope is that sooner rather than

later, we will overhaul Ontario's name-change process in an effort to stop child molesters from hiding their pasts.

Secondly, I'd like to see real help for MS patients. While providing follow-up care is a step in the right direction, I think Ontario needs to push for therapy trials. Some of you will argue that these procedures carry risks, but this is why it's critical that we start running trials.

We have a responsibility to provide therapy options to our citizens instead of leaving them at the mercy of foreign medical communities. Because MS is such a crippling disease, I know most of the patients would want to volunteer for clinical trials. For us, this treatment may be a novel science, but for those whose time is running out, this treatment is their only hope.

1510

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield: The weekend of March 26 to 29 is the 26th International Conference of Alzheimer Disease International. People are coming from across the globe: from the Netherlands, Turkey, France, India, Prince Edward Island, Africa, Lebanon, Ireland, China, Tunisia, Finland, just to name a few—even Japan.

They're coming to share their knowledge on epidemiology, identification and prognosis. They will talk about social and cultural issues, and depression in elderly caregivers. They'll talk about rural and northern communities and the public stigma of the disease. They'll talk about the direct trials of drug use: what works and what doesn't work; and the ethics: what to do in end-of-life care.

They'll talk about community-based assessment, speak about behavioural challenges, and they'll talk about the quality of life of caregivers, respite care, staff training, cultural change in the homes and person-centred care. These are just a few of the topics that will be discussed over the next number of days.

Why does this make any difference here? In Toronto alone there are 39,000 people who have been identified with Alzheimer's disease, and 500,000 in this country. It will rise to 1.2 million within the next 10 to 12 years, a \$15-billion problem that will become a \$159-billion problem unless we do something about it. That's exactly what this 26th international conference is prepared to tackle, and I agree with them. I think we should be tackling it together.

BOMBARDIER IN THUNDER BAY

Mr. Bill Mauro: Last week we had another great announcement at Bombardier in Thunder Bay. Our government announced a \$125-million investment for the building of 50 new bi-level rail cars for GO Transit. This will allow the approximately 250 men and women connected with this line to continue their work—work that began with previous GO contracts.

You'll remember that the former government wasn't interested in funding mass transit. As a result, from 1995

to 2003, the local plant in Thunder Bay was in jeopardy of closing.

Our government committed to supporting mass transit in our 2003 platform and since that time we've made substantial investments: \$770 million for LRVs, \$416 million for replacement streetcars, \$280 million for subway contracts, \$94 million for previous GO contracts, and now another \$125 million. In total, our government has invested around \$1.7 billion toward a total of more than \$3 billion worth of contracts for Bombardier.

Today, there are 1,000 men and women working in Thunder Bay's Bombardier plant, an increase of 500 to 600, as a direct result of these investments.

This plant and its employees constitute a world-class facility. They produce world-class products and their reputation for quality is well known. The contracts announced, with our government's support, have positioned this plant as a major employer in Thunder Bay's economy for years to come, and that's providing greater security to the 1,000 men and women working in this plant.

LOYAL KIGABIRO

M. Phil McNeely: Durant la Semaine de la francophonie, je veux vous parler du groupe Loyal Kigabiro, un groupe des tambours sacrés du Burundi. J'ai assisté à leur spectacle de percussions le 11 mars dernier, à l'école élémentaire catholique des Pionniers à Orléans. Je remercie M^{mes} Carole Gauthier et Carole Payant, directrice et directrice-adjointe de l'école, pour leur accueil, ainsi que la présence de M^{me} Louise Michaud, directrice artistique du Festival d'Orléans. Un tel spectacle ne serait pas possible sans l'initiative et le travail de M. Patrice Ntatifiro.

Le groupe a fait ce spectacle grâce à une subvention de 5 000 \$ du Conseil des arts de l'Ontario. Le Loyal Kigabiro a su intégrer les femmes dans leur groupe alors que cela est interdit au Burundi. C'est un spectacle où le chant, la danse et le rythme du son des tambours nous permettent de comprendre le respect des Burundais pour le tambour, l'instrument sacré au Burundi. Les artistes portent l'uniforme national aux couleurs du Burundi, soit le rouge, le blanc et le vert. Les spectacles se font dans les écoles francophones que fréquentent les membres du groupe.

J'aimerais donc saluer et féliciter le jeune Parfait Représentant Bonwa, en 6^e année, pour sa participation.

Ce fut un honneur pour moi d'assister au spectacle et de leur offrir le drapeau franco-ontarien, le Burundi étant un pays membre de la francophonie.

MOTIONS

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion respecting the consideration of concurrence in supply.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order, the order for concurrence in supply for the various ministries and offices, as represented by government orders 34 through 45, inclusive, and order G167, second reading of Bill 167, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, shall be called concurrently; and

That when such orders are called, they shall be considered concurrently in a single debate; and

That the time available to 5:50 p.m. shall be allotted to the debate, divided equally among the recognized parties, at the end of which time the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and shall put every question necessary to dispose of the order for concurrence in supply for each of the ministries and offices referred to above, and to dispose of all remaining stages of Bill 167; and

That any required divisions on the orders for concurrence in supply or on the motion for second reading of Bill 167 shall be deferred to deferred votes, such votes to be taken in succession with one five-minute bell.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): The members have heard the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motion agreed to.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

WORLD WATER DAY

JOURNÉE MONDIALE DE L'EAU

Hon. John Wilkinson: Today is World Water Day, an international day of action to draw attention to the importance of clean, safe water.

Ontario has one of the world's largest supplies of fresh water, and over the past decade we have made significant strides to protect it. We have gone from having people get sick from water to being the North American leader in providing safe water.

Je veux d'abord rappeler qu'aujourd'hui est la Journée mondiale de l'eau, une journée internationale de mesures de sensibilisation à l'importance de la pureté et de la salubrité de l'eau.

L'Ontario bénéficie d'une des plus importantes réserves d'eau douce de la planète. Ces 10 dernières années, nous avons fait un grand pas en avant en ce qui a trait à la protection de cette réserve. Nous sommes passés de cas de maladies liées à l'eau à une qualité de l'eau qui fait de nous les chefs de file de la protection de l'eau en Amérique du Nord.

Through our groundbreaking source protection program, we have funded more than 2,500 on-the-ground actions to protect local water sources.

We've also taken significant steps to help restore the ecological health of Lake Simcoe, the Great Lakes and their respective watersheds to protect families in nearby communities. Lake Erie's Wheatley Harbour is one great

example. The harbour, once a toxic hotspot, has been brought back to life. Water quality has improved and the harbour is now home to an abundant and diverse community of fish and wildlife.

Last year, we passed the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. It's about helping Ontarians use water more wisely, promoting innovation in Ontario's growing water sector and sustaining Ontario's water infrastructure.

We're bringing together the best minds in academia and the business world to create an advisory body called WaterTAP to harness our water leadership, to create more skilled jobs that will build a stronger and more competitive economy, and to support water technology companies so they grow, expand and export not water but ideas to an increasingly thirsty world, using their made-in-Ontario expertise.

Ontario is home to a number of companies who are leading the way in the water technology and water services sectors, like Trojan of London, Ontario, which specializes in using ultraviolet light to safeguard the world's water. In the last three years alone, Trojan has created more than 100 new jobs and has just won a contract for the largest ultraviolet disinfection system installation in Melbourne, Australia.

Another example is Zenon, which developed the mobile water filtration technology used to remediate Walkerton's well water. Today, Zenon is part of GE Water and Process Technologies, employing hundreds of Ontarians in Oakville and around the province.

1520

We believe that clean, safe water should be available to everyone, and that's why we're taking a leadership role to bring clean water to more people. Close to half of the world's population, about 46%, do not have running water in their homes.

Nous croyons que tout le monde devrait avoir accès à une eau pure et salubre. C'est pourquoi nous assumons un rôle de chef de file afin d'offrir de l'eau pure à une population plus nombreuse. Près de la moitié de la population mondiale—environ 46 %—n'a pas l'eau courante à la maison.

We're eager to export the technologies that helped us turn things around so that we can create good jobs here at home and help our friends and partners throughout the world deliver clean, safe water to their people too.

In honour of World Water Day, I'm pleased to announce the new Minister's Award for Environmental Excellence to recognize outstanding environmental achievement, leadership and innovation in environmental protection right here in Ontario.

I encourage all Ontarians to think about our most precious resource, the envy of the world, and what they can do to preserve it for the future of our province.

J'invite tous les Ontariens et Ontariennes à avoir une pensée pour notre ressource la plus précieuse, celle qui fait l'envie de toute la planète. Je les encourage à se demander ce qu'ils peuvent faire pour la protéger pour l'avenir de notre province.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Responses?

Mr. Toby Barrett: So here we are recognizing World Water Day, and there's no doubt that the availability of water and the protection of water is one of the world's and Ontario's most important resources for priority, including for our PC caucus, but I do question the push. It seems we designate so many days on the calendar, and I'm not sure to what extent we see real-world results.

We have World Water Day some four months after the pomp and ceremony of the government's legislation, the Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act. I'm not sure if really anyone across the way did much to lift a finger with respect to the opportunities or the conservation that the bill supposedly allows for. Headlines were grabbed, the cameras went home, and, in my view, so did the government's initiative to crack down on this issue.

One question: Are municipalities presently at work creating and submitting the water use and sustainability plans?

Where are we at as far as WTAP, the vaunted new water corporation? We do know that at the time, the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association described it to us as "an unnecessary cost to taxpayers," adding that it would "slow down the process of developing and implementing regulation." I told the House during debate that WTAP does create another layer of bureaucracy, another layer of red tape.

The legislation can create the spectre of taxpayers' money going to particular companies favoured by the McGuinty government and, again, can be seen to skew the marketplace where we have a situation where big government starts picking winners and losers in the water business.

Again, things were pumped up four months ago: pump and dump. Things were dumped once the television cameras were turned off.

We have noted, of course, that water, and particularly clean water, an element so basic and so essential to individuals, to life on earth, to business, to industry, to our environment, does require protection. There's no question about that. To what extent today's water day brings us closer to that goal, let alone the aforementioned legislation—I hope this government is not watering down the message, if you will, with a seemingly endless series of environmental dates we put on our calendars. To what extent does that dilute the message, dilute the public relations and the promotion, something we saw so successfully done for decades now with Earth Day?

This is a group that brought forward World Water Day. The members opposite brought forward Zero Waste Day; the same caucus brought us Climate Change Awareness Day, Greenbelt Day—on and on.

Environment Commissioner Gord Miller's recent report indicated, again in his words, "poor" and "deteriorating" conditions with respect to water near shore areas, along the beaches at both Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. Again, where's the progress on that one?

The world is facing a water crisis, something that will increase in magnitude with the ever-increasing popu-

lation in the world. Close to two billion people now, at present, live in water-stressed regions. By the year 2025, there's indication that two thirds of the world's population will face water scarcity. This appears to be a given. There is work to be done by advanced economies like Ontario's.

In my lifetime, the world's population has tripled. In my lifetime, water consumption has increased seven times over, so the future does give pause for concern. We know that by 2025 we will need an 80% increase in water supplies just to produce food, and particularly meat, which is much more popular as the world grows.

Mr. Howard Hampton: On behalf of New Democrats, I'm pleased to be able to make a few remarks on World Water Day.

Ontario is indeed blessed. In fact, of all the jurisdictions on the planet, Ontario is probably in one of the most favourable positions when it comes to the availability of clean, safe drinking water and having abundant resources. But we should be judged on what we do within our own bailiwick in terms of taking responsibility for our water.

Sadly, First Nations in Ontario today are having to join forces to oppose the shipment of 16 radioactive-contaminated steam generators through the Welland Canal, the Great Lakes and along the St. Lawrence River. In fact, these First Nations are marking World Water Day as the launch of the light-blue ribbon campaign to protect Ontario's Great Lakes water supply.

Southwest regional Anishinabek Nation chief Chris Plain says the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Bruce Power Corp. did not sufficiently consult First Nation communities about the proposed nuclear waste shipment. "We will do everything in our power to prevent the Ontario and federal governments and the nuclear power industry from using our precious waterways as a garbage disposal route," says Grand Council Chief Patrick Madahbee of the Anishinabek Nation.

As I said, we should be judged on what we do in our own bailiwick. Before we talk about the global market for water, we need to look after our own backyard. What's happening in our own backyard? Well, over 80 First Nation communities are currently under boil-water advisories, and 21 communities are deemed to be at high risk for contamination. We have this unusual situation where the federal government says, "Water resources are an Ontario responsibility," and Ontario says, "But First Nations are a federal responsibility," and everyone forgets that First Nations are citizens of Ontario too.

We would all be wise, on World Water Day, to remember northern communities like Kashechewan, whose residents were forced to evacuate by the hundreds due to poor water quality and unsanitary conditions in 2005. Contamination and inadequate water and sanitation services in First Nation communities are a real and present threat to human health and to the environment.

1530

The government claims that its Water Opportunities and Water Conservation Act aims to stimulate Ontario-

based clean water industry by creating municipal demand for clean water technology and by supporting clean water technology development. I can only say that First Nations across Ontario are saying, "And what about us? Don't we matter? Don't we count?" And rightfully so, that they ask these questions.

Despite the good intentions of the government's bill, there are a number of concerns about how this bill will improve the quality of life for all Ontarians, including those living in aboriginal communities in the north. Some of the concerns include affordability for consumers and infrastructure costs. Announcing a bill but then failing to provide municipalities with the funding to undertake water conservation measures is not a way to proceed. It will likely result in higher water rates falling on local citizens. Municipalities already spend \$1.5 billion per year on water and waste water systems, and in 2008 the Association of Municipalities of Ontario review found that municipalities would have to spend an additional \$6 billion every year for 10 years to make up the gap between current investment levels and needed investment levels.

On World Water Day, one is given to ask, "Where is the province in addressing this issue?" Access and quality: We're worried that this bill may lead to privatization of water delivery, leading to rising costs and water for some and not for others..

PETITIONS

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS TREATMENT

Mr. Steve Clark: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas thousands of people suffer from multiple sclerosis; and

"Whereas there is a treatment for chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency, more commonly called CCSVI, which consists of a corrective angioplasty, a well-known and universally practised procedure that is low risk and at relative low expense;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the Minister of Health agrees to proceed with clinical trials of the venoplasty treatment to fully explore its potential to bring relief to the thousands of Ontarians afflicted with multiple sclerosis."

I'll affix my signature and send it to the table, and it is certified.

REPLACEMENT WORKERS

M^{me} France Gélinas: I have this petition that was collected by Mr. Joe Guido and Mrs. Selina Clement Mikkola, both members of Local 6500 USW Sudbury, and it reads as follows:

“Whereas strikes and lockouts are rare: 97% of collective agreements are settled without a strike or lockout; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers laws have existed in Quebec since 1978; in British Columbia since 1993; and successive governments in those two provinces have never repealed those laws; and

“Whereas anti-temporary replacement workers legislation has reduced the length and divisiveness of labour disputes; and

“Whereas the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout is damaging to the social fabric of a community in the short and the long term as well as the well-being of its residents;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to enact legislation banning the use of temporary replacement workers during a strike or lockout.”

I fully support this petition and will affix my name to it, and will ask page Devan to bring it to the Clerk.

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Mr. Phil McNeely: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas this government supports full-day kindergarten in all schools; and

“Whereas full-day kindergarten was introduced in Our Lady of Wisdom Catholic School, Convent Glen public school, ÉEC Sainte-Marie, Brother André Catholic School, École élémentaire publique Des Sentiers and École élémentaire catholique Alain-Fortin in Ottawa-Orléans in September of 2010; and

“Whereas it is the government’s intention to introduce full-day kindergarten in Fallingbrook Community Elementary School and Blessed Kateri Catholic school in Ottawa-Orléans schools in September 2011; and

“Whereas the government intends to fully implement full-day kindergarten in all schools by 2015; and

“Whereas parents of four- and five-year-olds have supported this program;

“Whereas the Conservative Party of Ontario said that they would freeze this program;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To support full-day kindergarten and to follow the implementation schedule which will complete the program by 2015.”

I will gladly sign this petition and send it up with Sydney.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr. Peter Shurman: I have here a petition being read in the Legislature for the first time, 123 pages long and signed by 1,229 people who come from my riding of Thornhill, Glen Shields, Brownridge and Concord West. It reads:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario and GO/Metrolinx are currently proposing the construction of a GO/Metrolinx intermodal station hub and parking lot on crown land (land registry PIN number 032320650) owned by the Ontario Realty Corporation, land which adjoins to the east of the Concord West community in the city of Vaughan and has been in the community’s traditional green space; and

“Whereas the land in question is ecologically sensitive and demonstrably part of the Bartley Smith Greenway; and

“Whereas safe access to this land and the said greenway by the Concord West community residents and seniors is needed from Rockview Gardens;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty government transfer the subject land from the Ontario Realty Corporation to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.”

I agree with this petition. I affix my name to it and file it with page Fatemah, from Thornhill.

TRAVAILLEURS SUPPLÉANTS

M^{me} France Gélinas: Il me fait plaisir de présenter une pétition qui a été avancée par M. Conrad Mazerolle de l’Association des enseignants francophones de l’Ontario.

« Attendu que les grèves et les lock-out sont rares; en moyenne, 97 % des conventions collectives sont négociées sans arrêt de travail; et

« Attendu que des lois contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs existent au Québec depuis 1978 et en Colombie-Britannique depuis 1993, et les gouvernements successifs de ces deux provinces n’ont jamais abrogé ces lois; et

« Attendu que la loi contre le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs a réduit la longueur et la discorde des conflits du travail; et

« Attendu que le remplacement temporaire des travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out compromet le tissu social d’une communauté à court et à long terme ainsi que le bien-être de ses résidents », ils demandent à l’Assemblée « d’adopter une loi interdisant le remplacement temporaire de travailleurs pendant une grève ou un lock-out. »

J’appuie cette pétition.

CHILD CUSTODY

Mr. Kim Craiton: I’m pleased to stand and read in the following petition. I would like to thank Mrs. Darlene Hachey from Windsor for her support in putting together over 2,000 signatures on these petitions. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“We, the people of Ontario, deserve and have the right to request an amendment to the Children’s Law Reform

Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their parents and grandparents, as requested in Bill 22, put forward by MPP Kim Craitor.

"Whereas subsection 20(2.1) requires parents and others with custody of children to refrain from unreasonably placing obstacles to personal relations between the children and their grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2) contains a list of matters that a court must consider when determining the best interests of a child. The bill amends that subsection to include a specific reference to the importance of maintaining emotional ties between children and grandparents; and

"Whereas subsection 24(2.1) requires a court that is considering custody of or access to a child to give effect to the principle that a child should have as much contact with each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child"; and, finally,

"Whereas subsection 24(2.2) requires a court that is considering custody of a child to take into consideration each applicant's willingness to facilitate as much contact between the child and each ... grandparent as is consistent with the best interests of the child;

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Children's Law Reform Act to emphasize the importance of children's relationships with their ... grandparents."

I'm extremely proud to put my signature on this and submit this.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Jim Wilson: A petition to restore medical laboratory services in Elmvale.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the consolidation of medical laboratories in rural areas is causing people to travel further and wait longer for services; and

"Whereas it is the responsibility of the Ontario government to ensure that Ontarians have equal access to all health care services; and

"Whereas rural Ontario continues to get shortchanged when it comes to health care: doctor shortages, smaller hospitals, less pharmaceutical services, lack of transportation and now medical laboratory services; and

"Whereas the McGuinty government continues to increase taxes to make up for misspent tax dollars, collecting \$15 billion over the last six years from the Liberal health tax" alone, "ultimately forcing Ontarians to pay more while receiving less;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the McGuinty government stop the erosion of public health care services and ensure equal access to medical laboratories for all Ontarians, including the people of Elmvale."

I agree with this petition and will sign it.

1540

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Rick Johnson: This petition is from the Strathroy fire department and the Mt. Brydges fire department.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

"Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

"Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

"Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Enact Bill 115, a private member's bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery."

I agree with this petition. I will sign it and present it to page Grace.

RURAL AND NORTHERN SCHOOLS

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to save rural and northern schools in Ontario:

"Whereas rural and northern schools are an important part of Ontario; and

"Whereas rural and northern schools are widely recognized for their high educational standards and intimate learning experience; and

"Whereas the frameworks of rural and northern schools are different from large urban schools and therefore deserve to be governed by a separate rural and northern school policy; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty promised during the 2007 election that he would keep rural and northern schools open when he declared that, 'Rural schools communities strong, which is why we're not only committed to keeping them open help keep—but strengthening them'; and

"Whereas Dalton McGuinty found \$12 million to keep swimming pools open in Toronto schools but hasn't found any money to keep rural and northern schools open in Ontario;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That Premier Dalton McGuinty and the Minister of Education support the citizens of rural and northern Ontario and suspend all accommodation reviews until the province develops a rural and northern school policy that recognizes the values of these schools in their communities."

I've signed this. and I'm going to send it with Madeleine.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Jeff Leal: I have a petition from Steve Guay, from Port Elgin, Ontario:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

“Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

“Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Enact Bill 115, a private member’s bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery.”

I agree with this, will affix my signature to it and give it to Cherechi.

COYOTES

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas coyote predation is a growing problem in rural Ontario, especially on farms; and

“Whereas there are documented reports that coyotes are attacking people and pets and the attacks are getting more aggressive; and

“Whereas as many as 6,000 lambs and sheep alone are killed by coyotes on Ontario farms every year; and

“Whereas these losses are seriously impacting farmers’ incomes; and

“Whereas the current control measures authorized by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the municipal financial incentives for control of coyote predation program are cumbersome and impossible to adhere to;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ontario government minimize predator losses by implementing a province-wide coyote control program that includes a \$200 bounty for each coyote carcass and allow counties to implement their own proof-of-kill collection system.”

I’ve signed this. I’m going to send it with Madelaine again.

PARAMEDICS

Mr. Lou Rinaldi: I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas paramedics play a vital role in protecting the health and safety of Ontarians; and

“Whereas paramedics often put their own health and safety at risk, going above and beyond their duty in servicing Ontarians; and

“Whereas the government of Ontario annually recognizes police officers and firefighters with awards for bravery; and

“Whereas currently no award for paramedic bravery is awarded by the government of Ontario; and

“Whereas Ontario paramedics deserve recognition for acts of exceptional bravery while protecting Ontarians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“Enact Bill 115, a private member’s bill introduced by MPP Maria Van Bommel on October 6, 2010, An Act to provide for the Ontario Award for Paramedic Bravery.”

I’ve signed this petition. I’ll send it to the table with page Riley.

TAXATION

Mr. Jim Wilson: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the government of the province of Ontario has entered into an agreement with the government of Canada to implement the harmonized goods and services tax; and

“Whereas the majority of Ontario taxpayers are opposed to the implementation of this tax; and

“Whereas the HST will add 8% to many goods and services where currently only the 5% GST is charged and will result in increased costs for all Ontarians and may create financial hardship for lower-income families and individuals;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government rescind its decision to implement the HST in Ontario.”

I want to thank the corporation of the town of New Tecumseth for sending this batch of petitions to me.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr. Phil McNeely: A petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Orleans urgent care centre provides emergency care for the residents of Orleans, utilizing many of the same capabilities along with the medical facilities and the equipment available at a hospital emergency department. The OUCC is equipped to administer treatment for serious acute medical conditions, including heart attack, asthma, fractures and dislocations, lacerations and allergic reactions;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“As the funding is up for renewal, to continue to provide funding to the Orleans urgent care centre to allow this clinic to stay open evenings and weekends to support

the health needs of the community of Orleans and surrounding areas.”

This is signed by several people from Ottawa–Orléans, and I put my signature and send it up with Fatemah.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr. Steve Clark: I'd like to thank the Food for All Food Bank in Prescott for providing me with this petition.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas agriculture plays an important role in Ontario's economy and deserves investment;

“Whereas PC MPP Bob Bailey has introduced a significant tax credit for farmers who donate agricultural goods to food banks, helping farmers, food banks and people in need;

“Whereas over 25 million pounds of fresh produce is disposed of or plowed back into Ontario's fields each year while food banks across Ontario struggle to feed those in need;

“We, the undersigned, call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to call MPP Bob Bailey's private member's bill, Bill 78, the Taxation Amendment Act (Food Bank Donation Tax Credit for Farmers), 2010, to committee immediately for consideration and then on to third reading and implementation without delay.”

I agree with the bill, will affix my signature and send it to the table with page Madelaine.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONCURRENCE IN SUPPLY

SUPPLY ACT, 2011

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2011

Hon. Monique M. Smith: I move concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Government Services; the Ministry of Revenue; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry; the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care; the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade; the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, including supplementaries; the Ministry of Transportation; the Ministry of Children and Youth Services; the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs; and the Cabinet Office, and I move second reading of Bill 167, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Debate?

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Today we are debating concurrently concurrence and the Supply Act. Just as a little refresher for my colleagues in the House, which I needed as well today to remember why we do this every year: In order for the expenditures estimates to be

approved by the Legislative Assembly, they must be reviewed and passed by the Standing Committee on Estimates; reported back and received by the Legislative Assembly, with the standing committee's recommendation that it be approved; and the assembly must concur in that recommendation.

1550

The expenditure estimates of the ministries and legislative offices that were not chosen for review by the standing committee are deemed under the standing orders of the Legislative Assembly to have gone through the process. However, the Legislative Assembly must actually approve the expenditure estimates of the ministries that were chosen for review by the standing committee by the passing of orders of concurrence, which is what we are doing today.

After there is deemed or actual concurrence in all the estimates for a fiscal year, the Supply Act for the fiscal year can be introduced in the Legislature for first reading. And we are doing concurrently, as I mentioned, the Supply Act. The Supply Act has to be enacted for each fiscal year. The legislation is essential because, if passed, it will provide the government with the necessary statutory authority to finance required expenditures for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

The member for Beaches–East York is not listening to my primer. I'm a little offended. I'm just trying to help you out here.

Supply gives the government the authority to finance the programs it has set out, fulfill its commitments and put its vision into practice. All expenditures that have been incurred under the Supply Act must be in accordance with the main and supplementary expenditure estimates for the 2010-11 fiscal year, which have already been reviewed and approved by the Legislative Assembly.

The Supply Act does not authorize any new spending. Pending the results of the Supply Act vote, spending authority is provided under interim appropriation statutes, which are generally repealed with passage of the act.

Interjection.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We're just so delighted to have you here, the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound. We're glad that you're here for this important debate today.

Mr. Bill Murdoch: I am too.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: Thank you.

Because the Supply Act is intended to be the statutory authority for all expenditures incurred during 2010-11, it is deemed to have come into force on the first day of the fiscal year. In this case, if passed today, the Supply Act would be deemed to have come into force on April 1, 2010.

The amounts included in the Supply Act are based on main and supplementary estimates for the fiscal year 2010-11 that have been tabled in the Legislature. The act, as I said before, does not authorize any new spending.

With that, I look forward to hearing some no doubt inspired debate from my colleagues opposite.

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters): Further debate?

Mr. Norm Miller: I may need some more water here, because I seem to have a bit of a cough happening just as I'm about to speak.

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to debate this concurrence-in-supply motion. As was mentioned by the government House leader, it doesn't authorize any new spending. I would call it more of a housekeeping motion that we do each year. But I would like to use the opportunity in this debate to talk about the budget process, seeing as the provincial budget will be delivered next Tuesday.

During the course of the pre-budget hearings this winter, our PC members on the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs heard from dozens of industry experts, from economists to nurses, miners to farmers, teachers to manufacturers. Based on what we heard, our caucus has offered our own recommendations.

Across the province, families have told us they cannot afford skyrocketing hydro bills. They are tired of new taxes like the HST and the eco tax, and they want to see change. Our members have read dozens of letters and emails in this House to underscore the challenges that Ontario families are facing. Seniors especially are struggling to keep their heads above water as their incomes are increasingly eroded by ever-rising bills. The upcoming provincial budget provides this government an opportunity to provide that change and give families the respect and relief they deserve.

Our caucus also received hundreds of written submissions from businesses and families who were compelled to provide their advice on a variety of issues on how to best get Ontario moving forward, how to protect the government services that matter most and how to give families a chance to catch up.

I'd like to quote for you from just a few of the presenters that we heard on the finance and economic affairs committee, and from submissions made to the committee.

Rob Rea of the Windsor-Essex Regional Chamber of Commerce said, "With respect to energy, to maintain a robust economy and achieve economic growth in Ontario, businesses need access to reliable and affordable energy."

Just in case that's not clear enough, Michael McSweeney of the Cement Association of Canada was a little more blunt. He said, "The electricity crisis that you're facing today in Ontario is not just a residential consumer political battle; it's a crisis that will soon have business running out of the province looking for more friendly territories to invest in."

And Mr. McGuinty's time-of-use tax machines aren't any better. Joan Brintnell of Lions McInnes House, a provider of intervenor services for the deaf-blind, said, "I can't tell a deaf-blind person that they can't have a bath at 9 in the morning because they need to get up at 6 o'clock to do that. There's no relief there."

Just a few comments from real people trying to live and work under the McGuinty government.

But outside the hearings, members of the Ontario PC caucus and our leader, Tim Hudak, criss-crossed Ontario

in January talking to families in more than 80 communities. Based on their advice, I would like to outline some of our recommendations for the upcoming budget: to create well-paying private sector jobs, to get government focused on services that matter to families and to give families the relief they deserve.

First, the McGuinty government must change its approach to private sector job creation. Rather than hand out massive subsidies to foreign companies like Samsung or Ubisoft, we believe in creating a level playing field to give all businesses the chance to invest and create jobs here. That means a drastic change in approach is necessary from this government. We're calling on the government to put an end to its corporate welfare schemes to pick winners and losers in the marketplace. We're calling on them to give small businesses a break by appointing a member of the cabinet to be responsible for meeting measurable hard targets in red tape reduction. We're calling on them to commit to investing in job-creating infrastructure projects like the mid-pen and 407 East highways.

Businesses were clear in telling us that provincial policies and red tape are job killers. Katherine Walker of the Sarnia Lambton Chamber of Commerce told us, "Compliance regulations and standards, along with duplication of paperwork to meet audit requirements ... creates a disadvantage and severely limits business's ability to be competitive. The cost to do business in Ontario eats up ever-shrinking margins, discourages investment, eliminates growth and pressures sustainability."

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business told us that one in four businesses "would not have started their business had they known the full impact of the regulatory burden on their business." That's a shocking statement and all the more worrisome given that small business will be the catalyst for real economic recovery and job creation.

The McGuinty government must get government focused on the priorities that matter for families. We absolutely must get the size of government under control. This government's reckless spending, waste and record deficits mean that it's on course to double the province's debt. The deeper that the McGuinty government digs into a hole, the harder it will be to dig out and the more essential services like health care will be put in jeopardy.

That's why, with the 2011 budget, we are calling on the government to fix the broken arbitration system and ensure that public sector agreements reflect the ability of families to pay the bills. We are calling on the government to scrap its wasteful LHIN bureaucracy and invest those tax dollars into front-line health care.

To rein in waste across the board, we are calling for a mandatory sunset review process to be included in this year's budget that forces every government body to justify their existence and continued value to the public.

The Auditor General's report involving the Municipal Property Assessment Corp's expenses and procurement revealed bad business practices costing Ontario families millions of dollars—money spent on incentives and pro-

motional items like a Nintendo Wii, signature golf clubs, lavish dinners and lunches for staff, and the list goes on and on.

All this when Ontario households are trying to make their hard-earned dollars stretch from month to month, which brings me to our final point: that this government must provide families with relief.

1600

The HST, the eco tax, auto insurance premiums, skyrocketing hydro bills—these costs add up. We want to see the McGuinty government use this year's budget to finally give Ontario families and seniors some relief, but after nearly eight years of increasing taxes we're not hopeful. That's why we ask for this government's firm commitment that there won't be any new taxes like school board taxes, a new eco tax on cars or a carbon tax, or any surprise announcement after the budget. We're calling for the removal of the eco tax on TVs, gaming systems, laptops and DVD and Blu-ray players. As well, hydro bills are no longer just a bill for Ontario families; they have become the bill. That's why we're calling on the McGuinty government to pull the plug on their expensive energy experiments that are driving up the cost of hydro, including their smart meter tax machines.

I would like at this point to bring it back to the riding level. I would say virtually every day I've received a new email from a constituent concerned about their energy bills and I just want to get a couple on the record. Here's one: "This month's bill mentions that we get 10% off from the Ontario government. The next line reads that we will be getting a delivery rate increase effective starting Jan 1, 2011. Is this a joke?"

"Things are out of hand."

Signed by, "Unhappy electricity user and tax payer."

I think consumers, after seeing their bills go up 75%—100% if you take in time-of-use meters—aren't fooled by this. Raise the rates 100%, give them 10% back and they're supposed to be happy. Well, people aren't happy out there.

A Parry Sound resident wrote—

Interjections.

Mr. Norm Miller: These are real people who are writing, for the members of the government. You might want to listen to some of the people in your ridings.

A Parry Sound resident wrote, "We are very concerned about the cost of hydro. We live in a 1,200square-foot bungalow, two bedrooms, one bathroom.

"The cost of hydro is beyond the what the average Ontario citizen can now afford. We are not referring to the people working in major centres where income is much higher.

"We are concerned about those in the Parry Sound area."

Another constituent wrote, "I am a senior living on a fixed income. I was quite disturbed to hear of an increase to hydro rates, immediately after receiving a letter from Hydro One telling of TOU prices to be effective at the end of March. The TOU prices also reflect an increase to hydro rates. These rate increases seem to be quite fre-

quent lately, and appear to be at the whim of Hydro One. Now rates will also go up again to pay for Hydro One's lawsuit that was of their own doing and greed.

"A very concerned citizen."

I've got hundreds and hundreds of those letters. I could go on all day with different, very specific examples.

As well, we are calling yet again for an audit of the debt retirement charge so that families and seniors know exactly how much debt is left. Very quickly: The debt retirement charge was to pay for the residual stranded debt. The residual stranded debt was \$7.8 billion in 2002. That amount of money has been collected. People paying that debt retirement charge every month on their hydro bill want to know and have a right to know how much is left. Some \$7.8 billion dollars have been collected. How much is owing on that bill?

Ontario families cannot afford another McGuinty government budget that raises government spending well beyond Ontario's economic growth and Ontario families' ability to pay. We're calling on the government to release a budget that focuses on job creation, getting government spending under control and giving respect and relief to Ontario families.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Michael Prue: It is indeed a privilege to rise after the eloquent presentation made by the member from—

Mr. Norm Miller: Parry Sound—Muskoka.

Mr. Michael Prue: No. He did a good job too, but I was thinking about the honourable member who represents the city of North Bay. She gave an eloquent rendition of what this is all about. She talked about supply and motion, but I think the bottom line is that unless the Legislature passes this, a whole bunch of civil servants and people who work very hard don't get paid. I think that's what the debate should be about because they are people who deserve our support. They are people who work very hard for the people of Ontario. They work in ministries that have been subject to some kind of review, but they, too, indeed need to be paid. I think that's what's important.

The other thing she didn't say is that the habit in the Legislature is that we debate budget issues more than the supply motion. We don't talk about the need to pay people their wages, because we understand intuitively that people need to be paid for the work they do, but we often talk about what's in the potential budget and/or what is going to happen next week.

I want to talk about what I'm hoping is going to happen in the budget next week. I'm not dreaming in Technicolor, because I know Liberals only too well. I know that this government is as conservative as anything we envisage or that we see in Ottawa at this time, and I know that whatever the Harper government in Ottawa does, the McGuinty government is probably going to walk pretty much in lockstep. I watch them around the whole HST fiasco as Ottawa says how important it is to have the HST, and then to see the McGuinty government fall in lockstep and start talking about the same things.

I remember, you know, when the finance ministers—they used to debate across this aisle fiercely with the finance minister of the Conservative government in Ottawa, Mr. Flaherty. They had fierce, fierce debates between one side and the other, depending on who held the office of finance minister and who was the critic. But since he went there, it seems that almost everything that is said in Ottawa is echoed here in Ontario. It is hard to listen to the finance minister today in Ontario without listening to him echoing the praises and the same phrases and the same things that he is doing—what the Minister of Finance does in Ontario, the other one does the lockstep argument and the same things in Ottawa.

New Democrats see it a little bit differently. We wonder why the government of Canada is so wedded to the idea of corporate tax cuts. We wonder in this Legislature why the government of Ontario, the McGuinty government, is wedded to those same corporate tax cuts.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Now, I heard somebody over there on the other side yell about Jack. Jack is going to do the right things by the people of this country, I am absolutely—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: I think that's the thing: She doesn't know Jack. She doesn't know Jack at all. I've had the privilege of knowing Jack Layton for many years. I knew of him, but I actually got to know him very well when I was mayor of East York and he was a Metropolitan Toronto councillor. We sat on the same council for five years. I watched a man who is very smart in terms of figuring out what is happening and how to take advantage of it for the people he represents literally at all times. I watched a man who, when Mel Lastman was mayor and didn't have a clue often one day to the next what he was doing, was able to wring out concessions from Mel Lastman and make sure that the things that Jack believed in actually happened.

I watched him do the same thing with the Martin government. My God, does anybody over there remember how he wrung \$4.6 billion worth of concessions to keep that government in power? And he is attempting his very best to try to wring the same thing out of the Conservatives in Ottawa.

Now, I know that that's going to be an almost impossible task, and if anybody over there has a couple of dollars, I don't bet very often, but I'll be willing to bet that nothing that the Harper government can come up with right around now when I'm speaking will satisfy what he is looking for, because he is looking for a lot. He is looking for those concessions that he thinks will work, and if they are not there—he is an honourable man, more honourable than most politicians I have ever met in my entire life—I have extreme confidence he will do the right thing. If there are not the things in that budget that he has advocated for and that he believes in, then he will not support it. I expect by the end of today the newspapers, the blogs and everything else will be filled with stories about how Jack is not satisfied and about how this government's days are numbered.

1610

But I want to talk about this government here in Ontario, this very government that is always walking in lockstep with everything that Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Harper have to say in Ottawa. It is known, it is universally accepted, it is trite that by 3 o'clock on January 1, executives and CEOs in this province have already earned the average salary of an Ontario citizen—3 o'clock on January 1. They haven't even shown up to work because it's a holiday, and they've already earned as much as most people earn in a whole year.

What does this government have to say about that? You think it's normal. You think it's honourable. You think it's good. You support it. When they screw up, these barons of industry, these people who are appointed by governments, you give them huge paycheques. We've seen the same thing happening down in Niagara; we're seeing the same thing happen down in Windsor. Huge paycheques are given to people who screw up, and they already earn enormous amounts of money. What does this government say or do about it?

I've sat and stood here in my place and talked about the CEOs of Ontario, all of those on the public dime, all of those who were in public institutions and the salaries that they earned: \$6 million a year, \$5 million a year, hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. I went down through the list. I went down, one after another, and I asked the Liberals to think about limiting these salaries, which are gross by comparison. Ordinary people can't even fathom what it is to earn this much money for screwing up so badly.

I listened to my colleagues today in the Conservative Party asking questions about the OPA and the screw-ups of these government-appointed people. They've gone from—if their figures were right—about 15 people a few years ago to 75 now. They've gone from a couple of million dollars to \$15 million. Things aren't going well, yet this government insists that we pay all of this money.

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: Yes. They want to pay all this money to all of these people. They never stop to think, are we getting any value for the money? Are taxpayers well served? Are those people paying for these bloated salaries—\$20,000, \$30,000 and \$40,000 a year—getting any value at all?

The NDP proposed something which I didn't think was radical at all. It's certainly something that is quite common over most of Europe. That is that we limit the salaries to five, six or 10 times the average industrial wage or, as we put it, that they earn no more than twice as much as the Premier. My goodness, what a radical thought. The Premier of this province, who ultimately is responsible to this Legislature and to 13 million people, we pay a veritable pittance. I don't know what he makes—people who earn \$200,000, \$220,000?

Mr. Peter Shurman: About that.

Mr. Michael Prue: About \$200,000, \$220,000. We are suggesting that the highest-priced CEO on the public dime shouldn't earn more than twice that.

Is that a radical thought? I think not. I think that's an absolutely logical thing. We put forward a bill, and we tried to say that maybe, just maybe, we should rein in some of these perks; maybe, just maybe, we should rein in some of these salaries; maybe, just maybe, we should question why these men and women who have been appointed by the Liberal government should earn more than twice the Premier's salary.

Now, I sit here every day. He doesn't have an easy job. I don't have to agree with him. He has a pretty tough job answering questions from me, answering questions from the member for Thornhill, answering questions from all sides of this House—although I'm sure most of the tough questions get asked in this little space over here. Most of the other questions aren't very tough to him at all, and I think that's by design. But he has a pretty hard job. The press makes sure that he's on his toes. He has to be on top of every single issue as it happens, he has to answer every single complaint, and he is ultimately responsible for a budget in excess of \$100 billion and the lives of 13 million people.

When we raise this issue—you know, how come somebody running a nondescript little corporation makes two or three or four times, or 10 times more than the Premier?—we are met with total indifference. And I have to ask the Liberals opposite the same question that I asked those many months ago, when our bill was—there are only two alternatives here. Either the Liberals opposite think that these people are worth four to five or six or 10 times more than their own Premier, or they have to think that the Premier is four or five or six or 10 times less worthy than they are. In either event, I don't understand this.

I don't understand at all why this government is not doing something about what David Lewis used to call the “corporate welfare bums,” because they're not just at Exxon, they're not just at Shell or in the big banks or in the insurance companies. Today these bums also work for us, and I have to question: Is any individual worth this amount of money, and why isn't this government doing anything about this, to this day and probably in this budget? Between 1999 and today, some \$20 billion has been given in corporate tax cuts, first by the Conservatives but more recently and more generously by the Liberals, who replaced them.

As I said, I thought about David Lewis, and the reason I thought about him is on the weekend, I was cleaning out an old bookshelf. I probably have far too many books and probably read too much in terms of political science and economics and anthropology and religion and all the things that I like to spend my leisure time reading about. One of the books I found was David Lewis's *Corporate Welfare Bums*. I brought it into the office because I want to reread it. I had forgotten I had this little tiny paperback in my library. But what interested me wasn't that David Lewis had written this, because of course he had written this. It wasn't that he had pontificated about this, because a whole election—he set the electorate on fire with his talk about how people were ripping off the system and

not paying their taxes, while they were being gouged. But what intrigued me about the book is, I looked underneath; the foreword to the book and the critical analysis of the book was written by a Liberal, Eric Kierans. Remember him? It was written by Eric Kierans, and I had forgotten that.

I had forgotten the role that many Liberals used to think about: fairness, and tax fairness to ordinary people. It used to be that Liberals believed in that, and today they walk in lockstep with the Harper government and all those people in industry who say, “I'm paying way too much in taxes even though I make \$6 million a year. Please reduce my taxes. If you don't reduce the taxes of my company, I won't be able to hire additional people,” and all those other things which probably are not true at all. Today Liberals walk in lockstep. All those many years ago, Eric Kierans, brave soul that he was, agreed with the NDP that maybe, just maybe, people who earn a lot of money, and corporations, should pay their fair share.

I'm standing up here today to tell this government opposite that maybe, just maybe, you should say that people who earn a lot of money and corporations who have the money should pay their fair share. What would happen if you had another couple of billion dollars? Another \$2 billion or \$3 billion or \$4 billion? What would Liberals do with that money? I know one of the things you should do is you should put some of that money against the \$18.7-billion deficit that you are going to leave to the next government, because that's the reality. I was here when—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: That's what I'm going to talk about. I was here when the Conservatives left you \$5 billion.

1620

Hon. Carol Mitchell: It was \$6 billion.

Mr. Michael Prue: Okay, \$6 billion.

Mr. Peter Shurman: It wasn't either.

Mr. Michael Prue: Whatever it was, it was tiny in comparison to what you are going to leave someone else. It was tiny—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Prue: It doesn't matter. It was a depression. It is tiny in comparison to what is going to be left now. So maybe, just maybe, you will take some of that money, if you get it from your corporate friends, and pay it against the deficit.

Another thing you could do is take some of that money and help the poor. Heaven knows, when I opened up the *Toronto Star* today, I read that 400,000 Ontarians—400,000—rely on food banks. For those of you who were in question period today, did you hear what the Acting Premier had to say about that? He had nothing to say. He said absolutely nothing in terms of 400,000 people having to go to food banks.

I am totally aware that, later, the Liberals stood the member from Mississauga–Streetsville up to ask the very last question in the House of the Minister of Children and

Youth Services, trying to put a Liberal spin on it by saying that some children are being helped. But the reality is that 400,000 Ontarians today are relying on food banks, which is a 28% increase—28%—since 2008.

Now, 2008: Let me think about that magic date. Why does 2008 ring a bell? Oh, I remember now. The then minister, Minister Matthews, who is now the Minister of Health, stood here and talked about the Liberals' plan to end poverty in Ontario. You know, they were going to do 25 in five; within the next five years, they were going to reduce it by 25%. The first bellwether, the first real statistic we have, is that three years later, people are relying on food banks 28% more than they were before. Something is very wrong with this.

Why is it wrong? When I go out to places, I am told what the Minister of Community and Social Services has to say to all of the groups: those on ODSP, those who are on Ontario Works, those who rely on some form of public assistance to get by in their lives. The answer that they are told is, "Don't you know there's a deficit? Don't you know that we're in hard economic times?" Well, of course people know we're in deficit. Of course we know we're in hard economic times. But the question in their hearts and their souls and their minds is, how come the very, very rich and the corporations, like the banks and the insurance companies, are going to get a \$2-billion windfall, and why is it that this government has a complete hands-off attitude to corporate giants and CEOs who make \$5 million, \$6 million and \$7 million a year in general salary? Their actual take-home pay has gone up and their tax levels have gone down under this government.

Hon. Sandra Pupatello: So has yours.

Mr. Michael Prue: And the minister says that so has mine. I would gladly help the poor, as I did when this very government instituted a raise for all of us. I gave every single penny in that year—every single penny—to charity.

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Prue: And they holler some more, because they have no soul, because they have no idea whatsoever of that which they are talking about.

I am somewhat ashamed at all the catcalls coming from them. I am somewhat ashamed of all of them for what they're catcalling and for what they're saying. The reality is, they call me because I gave my money to charity. You know? They call me.

Mr. Jeff Leal: How do you know we didn't?

Mr. Michael Prue: I don't know what you did, member from Peterborough. I don't know what you did at all, but I do know that you never spoke about anything to do with this. I do know that.

This government is hell-bent on increasing corporate profits. In fact, in Ontario, corporate profits have gone up 7.9% in the last quarter and are now resting at \$66 billion. What do Liberals have to say about this? They probably say, "Great." I say, "Great." I think it's a good thing, but I think the people of Ontario want to get their fair share. I think the people of Ontario expect that when

corporate profits go up 7.9%, you don't get a tax decrease; you get a tax increase. You pay your fair share for living and working in Ontario and for the people who are here. People need this money; the province needs this money.

Now, through all the catcalls, I'm going to go on to the next, which is that the Ontario government says the corporate income tax cut will hand \$535 million to banks and \$135 million to insurance companies. These are government figures. Why? Why are you doing this?

Mr. Bruce Crozier: Because my son needs it.

Mr. Michael Prue: Oh, I have an answer over here: "Because my son needs it." The member from Essex says his son needs this money. Perhaps his son does need the money, but lots of people dream about having this kind of money or the kind of money like this to eradicate poverty in our province. Lots of people talk about this in terms of the kind of infrastructure that we could make in our schools and our hospitals and everything else if we had this kind of money.

They are this government's own figures. That's on top of the \$520 million provided to banks through the elimination of the capital tax. That's money this government no longer has. What could we do with \$520 million? Maybe some of them over there should ask about this. Maybe they should ask, "What could we do instead of eliminating the capital tax?" How could we help our communities? How could we build roads and schools and hospitals and government institutions and provide jobs and eradicate poverty and the thousand things that could and should be debated in this Legislature?

We also have the figure here that of the \$4 billion in corporate tax cuts the government has announced, \$1.2 billion will be pocketed by banks and insurance companies, the vast majority going to only eight companies which dominate Ontario's financial sector. I have here some figures from some of those because I think they would be interesting to anybody who might be watching this instead of the budget; I'm not sure how many people will be.

Scotiabank had a quarterly profit in the last quarter of \$1.2 billion. That's a 19% increase from the quarter before. Their CEO is paid \$10.6 million, up 10%. Anybody over there think that doesn't sound too good? Or how about the Royal Bank? A \$1.8-billion quarterly profit: That's a 23% increase from the quarter before. Its CEO is being rewarded with \$11 million, and that's up 6% from the year before.

Yes, and the member from Thornhill thinks he's in the wrong business. I think I'm in the right business because I think my job is to tell people about what's happening out there.

We have the TD Bank quarterly profit: \$1.5 billion. That's up 19% from the quarter before. Their CEO earns \$11.3 million, which is up 8% from the year before. Finally, we have the Bank of Montreal, the only other figures I have, which only made a paltry \$776 million, but it too was up 18%. Their CEO earns \$9.5 million, and that's up 28% from the year before. This is what's hap-

pening at the same time when people who earn minimum wage in this province have seen it frozen. I know that every time I say anything even remotely positive, it's quoted in the Legislature and then in some brochure the Liberals put out. But it was sad that there were no increases for all those years in the minimum wage, and increasing the minimum wage the few times that the Liberals did it wasn't a bad thing. I expect to see that in quotes somewhere, but I do hope you put the "but" in.

1630

This year, when you didn't do it again, was not a good move. This year was a sad move. Because to make it to \$11, after which it could have been indexed, after which someone who worked 40 hours a week could have made their way from the poverty line, would have been a real statement. It would have said that people who work 40 hours a week, who pay their way, who work hard, who make \$11 an hour have finally escaped poverty. But this government chose not to do it. I don't know why they chose not to do it, but they did. I guess some of the interests got to them.

I have to also talk about those people who don't even make the \$10.25 an hour. That is, all of the servers, all of the people in the restaurant industry, all of those people for whom it is expected that they're going to get tips earn substantially less. That has never been modified. In spite of the fact that today they are having their tips ripped from them, where the ministry and this government refuses to do anything to end the tip-out practice whereby employers take the tips from them when they are received and sometimes give back a portion to the servers who actually earned the tips. This is a government that is not really doing much when it comes to all of that.

I want to talk a little bit more about some of the other aspects here. The corporate tax cuts that this government is insistent upon giving all of the time are really out of whack. This government is hell-bent on making this the lowest tax jurisdiction in all of North America, and they'll make no bones about it. They'll make no bones about having a lower tax rate than some of the southern United States. They'll make no bones about having a lower corporate tax rate because they say that it's going to produce jobs. But the reality is that there isn't one scintilla of evidence that backs that up—not one single scintilla of evidence. In fact, corporate tax cuts have little positive impact on job creation since they have almost no impact on business capital investment spending.

If you look, most of the industries pocket the monies. There has been nothing in this province, except that corporations have been accumulating cash and similar liquid assets at an increasing rate, and in fact jobs have actually gone down. The big banks today, in spite of all the monies that have been poured in by this government, have 25,000 fewer people working for them than they did five years ago. So you give all these tax breaks to create jobs, and there are fewer jobs. Where are these tax breaks creating jobs?

We in the NDP think that there are alternatives that this government should be following—good alternatives,

alternatives that would work, that are used in Manitoba, in Quebec, in other places in North America where you reward companies who create jobs by giving tax breaks. You target them. You don't give a universal one so that corporate profits can go up, so that CEO salaries can be obscene, in the \$10-million, \$11-million and \$12-million range. You give tax breaks so that jobs are created, so that machinery is bought, so that people are employed. That's what needs to happen, and that's not what's happening here.

In fact, in Ontario we are pricing ourselves towards the bottom. We are becoming the Contadoras of North America. We are taking off after the somewhat failed—I think not even somewhat—the failed northern Mexico experiment on the border with the United States. Look at the combined tax rates for our major competitors. Michigan, which is right next door, right opposite my friend's riding—you go across to Detroit. The tax rate in Michigan is 38.2%. The tax rate in Ontario is 28.5%. We already have a tax advantage before more money is given away. Or look at New York, which you can look at across the lake from Toronto, and you'll see that they're at 36.1%. We already have a tax advantage. Or we look at Pennsylvania, which is not more than a few hours' drive from here: 37.8%. We have a nearly 10% tax advantage. If you look at the Great Lakes weighted average, it's 36.6%. We have an 8% tax advantage. If you look at the US weighted average at 36.1%, we have a 7.5% weighted average.

I'm not sure why we have to go lower. Perhaps someone in the Liberal Party can explain this. Can you explain why we can forgo all of the money, why we have to see profits increase, tax revenues decrease, why we see obscene CEO salaries?

I promised my colleague I'd save him five minutes, much to your pleasure, I'm sure, but I just want to talk about the HST. The government has insisted that tax harmonization wouldn't result in increased costs for consumers, but analysis conducted by Statistics Canada on behalf of the NDP—and we had to fight a long time to get it—found that the average family will pay \$792 more in taxes every year. Even after they receive \$322 in tax cuts and credits, they will be \$470 behind. Even if we assume businesses will pass every penny they save to consumers in lower prices, the average family will still pay \$638 more in taxes every year and receive \$322 in tax cuts and credits, leaving them \$316 behind. The middle class, of course, is hurt the most. The government's own estimates, obtained through freedom of information, indicate that the average family will pay \$225 more annually for these items alone.

When I go out to talk to the people of Beaches–East York, this is the number one issue. I don't think this will surprise Liberal members opposite. When you go out and talk to people, the HST is the number one issue. Even though the government may want to change this to education or health or hospitals or whatever they want to change it to, the number one issue to me at the doors and in places where I meet my constituents is the anger over

the HST. They're angry because they do not believe that this is revenue-neutral, as this government says. They know they are paying more and they know they are getting less.

I think this needs to be said. I'm saying it here today because this debate affords me the opportunity to talk about budgets more than supply. I'm saying this because I think the government needs to hear this. We in the NDP believe that there are some simple solutions, and the simple solutions are: exempting hydro and home heating costs from harmonized sales tax; replacing the general corporate tax rates from the 2009 budget with jobs-focused refundable tax credits for capital investment, training and innovation—such credits would reward businesses for investing in and creating jobs; and, lastly, we need some kind of a fiscal framework that acknowledges the widespread belief by economists that sustained growth can assist us in the long run.

I want to leave a few minutes for my colleague, but I think that this government needs to start listening to the people. They need to start listening to the other voices. They need to get out of lockstep with the Harper government in Ottawa. They need to start thinking for themselves, because the people of Ontario are demanding much more than is being delivered. They are asking for fairness. They are asking for justice. They are asking for an economy and a budget that works for them. Unless this government delivers on that next week, I think they're going to have a far harder time dealing with the electorate of this province than they can possibly ever imagine.

1640

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: I'm pleased to join in the debate this afternoon and talk about the Supply Act and concurrence. I thank the member from Beaches–East York for his comments—always a pleasure to listen to what he has to say.

I did look up “scintilla” while he was talking, and it does mean a tiny piece or a bit. So, thank you; that can be our word of the day.

Mr. Michael Prue: “Scintilla” is a good word.

Ms. Leeanna Pendergast: “Scintilla” is a very good word. When I looked it up, “prescience” was actually the word of the day, so there's another good one.

I did want to talk about the Supply Act in a succinct manner about exactly what the Supply Act does and the purpose of the Supply Act, and that's to authorize the expenditures for the current fiscal year up until March 31. So it's certainly not a wish list of things that opposition would like to see happen down the road or what they want to see. This is simply an act that will authorize expenditures for a variety of sums for the current fiscal year to March 31. I thought I would just be succinct and cover what this act is and what it allows the government to do for the people of Ontario and the services, and to protect public services in Ontario.

That said, the Supply Act is one of the cornerstone acts in the Legislature, and if passed, it gives the gov-

ernment, as I said, the necessary statutory authority to finance the required expenditures for the 2010-11 fiscal year. Supply gives the government the authority to finance the programs that the government has set out, to fulfill the commitments that are set out and, of course, to put the vision into practice. It has to be enacted for every fiscal year.

Interestingly enough, the Supply Act does not authorize any new spending. As I said, it's for all the expenditures that have occurred during 2010-11. Of course, without this necessary spending, the government would be unable to meet its obligations to the people of Ontario.

At present, temporary authority to spend for the fiscal year ending March 31, of course pending the voting of the supply, is provided through three things: It's provided through the Interim Appropriation for 2010-2011 Act, the Supplementary Interim Appropriation Act, 2010, and thirdly, the Supplementary Interim Appropriation Act, 2010 (No. 2). These statutes of course only provide temporary spending authority and are expected to be repealed if the Supply Act is passed.

On March 29, the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Dwight Duncan, will table this government's eighth provincial budget. The 2011 budget will build on the progress that has been achieved since 2003, and it will also put measures in place to protect our education and health care systems as our economy returns to balance.

Ontario is emerging, as we know, from a global economic recession. While all major economic indicators have improved from lows during the recession, Ontario's families and businesses are still feeling the effects of the global financial and economic crisis.

Despite the severity of the recession's impact on employment, Ontario has now recovered 91% of the jobs lost compared to just 15% in the United States. Since May 2009, Ontario employment has increased by more than 230,000 new jobs, and 84% of those are full-time.

Other indicators show that our economy is in fact rebounding. Manufacturing sales are almost 30% higher than the low that was recorded in May 2009. Auto sales in 2010 were up over 8%, and, of course, consumer confidence has surged over 20% in the last two months alone.

Our plan for the economy is all about giving the people of Ontario what they need to succeed. Of course, that's why we continue to improve on the fundamentals of our society, which are, as we know, education, health care, infrastructure, electricity and taxes.

The most important thing we can do to build a globally competitive workforce is to invest in our people and provide them with the best possible skills training and education that we can, and that's why we're committed to our ongoing investments in education. Under our government, 200,000 more post-secondary spaces have been created, student assistance has been doubled, and full-day kindergarten is in place in hundreds of Ontario's elementary schools. As of last September, approximately 600 schools are offering full-day kindergarten. By 2014, all 4,000 elementary schools in Ontario

will offer full-day kindergarten. It's the first program of its kind in North America.

A strong start in education makes for a strong finish. If you give children great early learning opportunities, they're much more likely to be successful in the long run: to finish high school, to go to college or university, to finish an apprenticeship, to get a good job, to enjoy a good standard of living and to become contributing, productive citizens. All this starts in the earliest years, and that's why it's so important that we move ahead with full-day kindergarten.

The investments we've made in education since 2003 are producing real results. The EQAO is the Education Quality and Accountability Office. That's a separate, independent, arm's-length agency responsible for testing and evaluating the level of results that our students are acquiring. The EQAO says that in 2003, 54% of our students were meeting the Ontario standard, which is 70%. This is actually a very high standard relative to other provinces when it comes to their standardized testing results. Since then, our results have improved 14 points, to 68%. That's real progress, but our goal is to get to 75%. In 2003, graduation rates were 68%; today they're 79%. We're up 11 points. Again, that represents real, measurable progress, and as I said, our goal is to get to 85%.

To be sure, you need more than just a smart workforce; you need a healthy workforce. A healthy workforce is a productive workforce, and our continuing investments in public health care provide the medical care and assistance to keep Ontario healthy. We have a plan to protect our public health care system, to ensure that the people of Ontario continue to receive the range and the quality of care that they need. We've built 18 more hospitals. We've hired about 10,000 more nurses and 2,900 more doctors; 107 of those doctors have graduated from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine, which our government opened in 2005. We have 200 family health teams working across the province, and we have introduced nurse practitioner clinics, the first of their kind in North America.

These investments and initiatives have brought in concrete results: 1.2 million more people in Ontario have a family doctor. Our government introduced the wait-time strategy. We're actively reducing wait times. That means patients have faster access to potentially life-saving service such as cancer surgery, hip replacements and CT scans.

Our infrastructure investments are supporting health and education systems and other programs and services that the people of Ontario value most. When we came to office, our province's infrastructure had been neglected for many years. Our government laid out a prudent and responsible plan to invest in strong, modern infrastructure, and that plan is delivering results. So far, we've built 18 hospitals, 400 schools, new bridges, sewers, public transit, high-speed Internet, recreation centres, and thousands and thousands of kilometres of roads. Our government's investments are protecting the environment, creating jobs and improving our electricity system.

Improving our electricity system, of course, is vital to our economic growth. A strong economy cannot exist, of course, without its electricity supply.

1650

As we know, previous governments made little investment in new electricity supply and transmission infrastructure. By 2003, Ontarians didn't even know if the lights would stay on. The previous government's reliance on five coal plants meant that about 25% of electricity came from dirty coal, and there was no plan for conservation, no plan for supply to keep up with demand. An interesting fact: The electricity system lost 1,800 megawatts of power capacity. That's the equivalent to Niagara Falls running dry. A brief experiment in market deregulation in 2002 saw spot market energy prices spike an average of 30% over seven months, which prompted the PC government to freeze rates at an artificially low level.

Since taking office, our government has made the long-overdue investments in the electricity system infrastructure that were needed to make sure the lights stay on. We're creating a clean, modern, reliable energy system that, of course, is attracting new investment to the province and creating jobs.

Our government is phasing out coal-fired generation, replacing it with cleaner generation which is improving the quality of air we breathe and reducing health care costs. So far, we've built 8,000 megawatts of new generation. We've upgraded 5,000 kilometres of transmission. We've increased the number of wind turbines from 10 to more than 700. We have thousands of solar energy projects across the province, 8,000 of which involve partnerships with our Ontario farmers.

The Ministry of the Environment recently filed its 39th annual report. This report says that our air is getting cleaner. It's tied to the fact that we're shutting down coal-fired generation in Ontario. So far, we've shut down eight coal-fired plants—the equivalent of taking 2.5 million cars off the road—and there are 11 more plants to go. We remain firmly committed to shutting all of them down.

The work we're doing to improve Ontario's electricity supply means we will have clean, reliable energy for years to come. It also means tens of thousands of jobs are being created, including an estimated 45,000 jobs in 2011 and over 60,000 jobs in 2012. While absolutely necessary, these investments are increasing electricity costs, which is why we've introduced the Ontario clean energy benefit. As of January 1st, the Ontario clean energy benefit is reducing after-tax electricity bills by 10% over the next five years. This is directly supporting four million residential consumers and more than 400,000 small businesses and farms. A typical household will save more than \$150 a year. Small businesses will save \$1,700 a year, and farms over \$2,000 a year.

The Ontario clean energy benefit is just one of a series of programs that we've put in place to help families and businesses with their electricity costs. Other programs include the Ontario energy and property tax credit, the northern Ontario energy credit, and the northern industrial electricity rate program.

The government's tax plan for jobs and growth is transforming Ontario into one of the most tax-competitive jurisdictions in the industrialized world for new business investment. The plan that we put in place has replaced the outdated retail sales tax with a modern value-added tax. Moving to the HST was the single most important thing we can do to create jobs and position the economy for future growth. It's making Ontario more competitive in the global economy by removing hidden layers of provincial sales tax.

Our tax plan also provides significant relief to Ontarians and their families. As of January 1, 2010, 93% of Ontario income tax payers are paying less tax, and 90,000 low-income Ontarians are no longer paying personal income tax. The average family will see an income tax cut of \$355 this year and every year going forward. The tax plan is providing Ontarians with \$12 billion in relief over three years. This includes three transition checks for eligible Ontarians totalling \$1,000 for families, \$300 for singles and \$260 permanent sales tax credits each year for every low- and middle-income adult and child.

We've also introduced the children's activity tax credit to help parents with the cost of enrolling their children in activities that encourage them to be healthy and to be active. Parents and guardians can receive a refundable tax credit worth up to \$50 per child under 16 years of age or up to \$100 for a child with a disability up to the age of 18 years. Because the credit is refundable, low-income parents who pay little or no income tax also benefit. The maximum amounts that may be claimed for the credit will also rise annually with the cost of living through indexation.

This new, permanent tax credit will provide about \$75 million each year to assist with the costs of enrolling children in extracurricular activities and it will benefit over 1.8 million children in about 1.1 million Ontario households.

Over all, more than two thirds of consumers are better off under the new tax package. We estimate that consumers will save a total of \$490 million in 2013. Our tax plan is helping our businesses save money and, in turn, supporting new investments and new jobs.

The HST is saving Ontario businesses more than \$500 million per year in paperwork costs. We also cut Ontario's tax rate on new business investment by half. In the third quarter, business spending on machinery and equipment has increased more than 10%. Under the new tax system, a typical Ontario restaurant is paying 67% less in provincial corporate and sales taxes, and a typical manufacturer will save 89%. These savings are good for business, good for investment and good for jobs.

A recent report confirms that Ontario businesses are passing on sales tax savings to Ontarians at a much faster pace than was originally estimated. Michael Smart, Canada's leading economic expert on the impacts of sales tax harmonization, finds that about two thirds of the new input tax credits given to businesses have been passed on to Ontarians in the form of lower consumer prices.

Further savings are expected to be passed on to consumers over time.

Along with our plan to create jobs, boost long-term economic growth and protect the progress that Ontarians have made in their schools and hospitals, our government has a prudent and responsible plan to reduce borrowing, cut spending and eliminate the deficit caused by the global recession.

When we came to power in 2003, we invested a hidden \$5.6-billion deficit that the previous Progressive Conservative government left. We eliminated this deficit ahead of schedule and then posted three consecutive balanced budgets. Then the global recession hit. We chose to lessen the impact on Ontarians through short-term stimulus investments and to protect our other public services. As a result, we have a deficit. Our current deficit projection of \$18.7 billion in 2010-11 is almost 25% lower than the \$24.7-billion deficit projected one year ago and a \$1-billion improvement over the 2010 budget projection.

We're also borrowing \$2 billion less than forecast in the 2010 budget due to the \$1-billion decline in the projected deficit and the \$1-billion payment to the province from the Teranet agreement. We're tackling the deficit through strong fiscal and expenditure management. Ontario has the third-lowest program spending per capita in Canada, and our per capita spending on government services is the second lowest of all provinces.

We've also recently announced several new measures to generate annual savings. This includes cutting or merging 14 government agencies, a proposed ban on all perks in the broader public sector and \$260 million in potential savings from a comprehensive review of all government programs and services. Furthermore, we're on track to reducing the size of the Ontario public service by 5% and have reduced consulting expenditures over 50% since 2003. We also reduced travel expenses by \$30 million, or 24%, last year, with an additional \$10 million to be saved this year.

Through the McGuinty government's investments since 2003, we've invested to protect health care and education. We've invested in a modern infrastructure, promoted a greener Ontario and lower business costs, and we've protected and enhanced programs and services for Ontarians. These investments continue to strengthen Ontario's economy, enhance our competitive advantage and, of course, create jobs.

1700

The upcoming 2011 budget will continue to build on this track record of strong support for Ontario families, businesses and communities. It will strengthen Open Ontario, the McGuinty government's five-year plan to create new opportunities for jobs and economic growth. It will build on the progress that we are making towards returning the economy to balance. It will lay out the measures to manage spending, eliminate the deficit and secure the province's long-term financial sustainability.

For all of the reasons above, I hope that all members of the House will see the need to support the Supply Act. I look forward to ongoing debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Peter Shurman: I'm pleased to rise to discuss for a while some of the issues that feed into the government's management of money, which is, after all, what a supply bill addresses. I think we'll be voting for it because we, too, believe that at the end of the day the people who work for this government deserve their paycheque, and that's what a supply bill assures.

But this government has to be held to account. This government is all about money. I listened with interest to my colleague from Kitchener–Conestoga rhyming off a long, long list of what she believes are accomplishments of this government. You've got to do it with more enthusiasm, though, I would say to my friend, because then I might even buy into some of this stuff. Listening to it rattled off that way, I'm not sure that I do.

Here's what I am sure of: I had lunch at McDonald's today and I made sure to order the McGuinty value meal. That's the one that's the most expensive thing on the menu, but the guy behind you pays.

Laughter.

Mr. Peter Shurman: Yes, it's an attempt at humour, but the point I'm trying to make here is that the McGuinty government is about that, and when you start to rhyme off lists of things that you've accomplished, you have to remember who put a hand in their pocket to accomplish what you believe are the successes that you've scored.

That member from Kitchener–Conestoga, for example, is one of the members who debated and voted against my Bill 143 two weeks ago, which was a bill that was supported by all three parties, originally, and a bill that would have helped seniors, who are arguably the hardest hit in our population, defer property taxes of up to \$5,000 per year. But she didn't support it, and she didn't by reading a list of reasons why, the same way she did today on the supply bill, and I don't think that she really believes what she's saying.

We'll dispense with that and we'll get on with my premise, which really places the onus on this government to account for how it handles money. This government, from that perspective, is not respectful of Ontario families. It decides on a program that's good for all of them, takes the money for them to pay for these programs and then says, "Look what we've done." That's an inappropriate approach because it doesn't reflect either what Ontario families necessarily want—they didn't get a four-year mandate to do anything they liked—or, given the times, what Ontario families need, because Ontario families needed some change very radically over the course of the past four years.

I'd like to focus for a moment on issues in my own riding of Thornhill. I've said in this Legislature many times that there is a clear-cut disparity owing to the lack of a proper funding formula for the delivery of health care services between the 416 and the 905. Simply by living on one side of Steeles Avenue at the north end of Toronto, or the other side of it at the south end of York

region, the medical expenditures on a per capita basis vary by a significant amount and a significant percentage.

If you live in Toronto, 416, the average amount spent on you is somewhere in the \$950-per-year range. If you live in York region, Thornhill, it's about \$200 less—about \$750 per capita. Why would that be? Well, the main reason is because of the huge growth in York region vis-à-vis Toronto, which has not sustained that kind of growth.

The fact of the matter is, there is an inappropriate approach to a funding formula that has to look at the real needs of a community on that basis.

I will cite some figures. Thornhill has a growing population. Thornhill spans significant pieces of two significant municipalities; one is Markham and one is Vaughan. The fastest-growth-rate areas of the province happen to be where? In Markham and Vaughan. The growth rate in Vaughan is 30%; in Markham, 20%. You can't come close to that anywhere else.

I want to move from one area, the health care funding that I've just specified, and look at social services. Social services representatives, including a representative mom, came to see me last week. I've seen these people basically for four years running now, and it's always the same. They look pained in terms of how they approach me because there's always this belief that any MPP has some sweeping powers and can make things change, when we all know that regardless of whether we're on this side of the House or the government side of the House, all we can do is bring the concerns to this House and see if we can do something about it.

Social services, in an area of growth, are suffering in the same, if not a worse way than health services in York region, and I'll cite the numbers here as well. Children's services under social service funding to this riding have nowhere near increased parallel to the population. As a matter of fact, York region sustains allocation for children's services of \$127 per capita per annum versus the provincial average of \$221. So ask yourself, when you hear me say that, how you even begin to consider supplying the social services required for needy children—and I don't mean just in the poverty sense, albeit that is true, too—in York region versus what you're doing in the rest of the province. It's almost impossible, and many in the children's services sector are convinced that essentially the crisis they have been apprehending has now arrived. They can't treat autistic kids. They can't treat kids with all kinds of problems. They just can't do it. So, it's not a question of wait-lists. It's a question of, where's the money coming from? We just don't have it, and this can't continue any longer. It just can't.

Children's services intervention people, coordinators and administrators have all approached me with their concerns, and they've got a mixture of problems. Obviously, the major one is severe underfunding, and a bit of political roulette that seems to be a very significant piece of the pie or piece of the puzzle right now.

Ministries switched in terms of who has the authority over children's services as it pertained to mental health

services—a very, very crucial issue. Formerly, it came under the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and has now moved to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. What happens is, it falls between stools and, over the course of approximately the last 15 years, according to the people I'm talking to, they've sustained only two funding increases. We're talking many years ago, and not sustainable funding increases, nothing that they can really count on.

Going back to children's aid and an issue that arose last year, the member from York–Simcoe, the member from Newmarket–Aurora and myself—all York region Conservative opposition members—made a fairly major fuss about the fact that children's aid was not only getting no increase but was being cut last year. Thank goodness, the fuss we made was enough to get the funding restored, but only restored to former levels. So children's aid couldn't do its job and children's mental health is suffering. We've got a problem in York region that comes from a disparity in funding.

I wanted to put that on the record because it has to be on the record somewhere. My friend from Beaches–East York, in debate about half an hour ago, talked about this government doing the right thing. So, where I can listen to a Liberal member like the member from Kitchener–Conestoga talk about all of these things she believes the government has scored points on, and then I listen to the member from Beaches–East York saying, “I defy the government to ante up when it comes to poverty,” I, too, have a problem.

But I can say, unlike what sounded like a positively oriented incitement to the government to do something on the part of the member from Beaches–East York, I fear that we're not going to see any change—not in the budget next week and certainly not between now and the election slated for October 6. I fear, as well, that the fallout from that will be faced by the next government, and I expect that to be a government made up of people from this side of the House.

1710

Let me move on to another issue that affects people in York region that I also wanted to get on the record. Speaking of election campaigns, there was an election campaign in 2007, and my opponent at the time, the Liberal incumbent, ran on a promise that the McGuinty government would extend the subway line—this is the Yonge Street subway line—from Finch Avenue right up into the heart of York region. Indeed, that was placed on a list of priorities for the GTA by Metrolinx. It was unfortunately at a price of \$3 billion to \$3.5 billion—not considered a priority that was right for the times, not then, not since. That's a subway line that has to be built. That was an empty promise coming from the Liberal side. That was part of MoveOntario 2020. I can tell you that on the question of extending the subway under Yonge Street, if you could put the shovels in the ground this afternoon, you wouldn't be cutting any ribbons until 2020 or after. That's what it takes to build a subway. So I want to see that happen.

The transit infrastructure in the GTA and in the province as a whole is in dismal shape—we know that—because it's been left fallow for years. If I were asking this question in question period of the Minister of Transportation across the way, what I'd get back is a tirade about what some government 15 years ago under somebody named Harris might or might not have done, because they like to cite history. I'm concerned with history over the last eight years; I'm concerned with promises made, promises broken; I'm concerned with what you consider to be your record over there; and I'm concerned with your ability to continue. Transit infrastructure in the GTA: something that has gone sadly lacking.

Transit needs to be expanded, but it needs to be done in an equitable and in a manageable fashion, not every time you feel a need—“There's an election coming up. We'll throw you a subway car,” that kind of thing.

It is apparent that wherever and whenever transit infrastructure is expanded and is modernized, there is an automatic commercial expansion that takes place. There's no question that the Yonge Street corridor going up past Richmond Hill is an area that in all official plans—York region, the town of Markham, the city of Vaughan, up in Richmond Hill—is planned for intensification. Some of it's already started. If there were a subway announced, there would be an awful lot more. It's something that's been urgent for a number of years now. It's not a question of if, but when, and the “when” has never been when anybody said.

It is really a function of Metrolinx—and we have to look at what Metrolinx is. Metrolinx has been basically using taxpayer dollars to produce supposed projects for transit improvement, but really, there's so little to show for it at this point. So I'm anxious for next week's budget to see what the promises are this time. I hope there's some money for York Region Transit, but I'm not holding my breath.

Vaughan hospital would be another example of infrastructure that is way overdue. We've been talking about it for six years. There's a very vibrant grassroots organization that has raised well in excess of \$1 million per year, and then more by private donation. There's been an assessment placed on the property tax bills for citizens of Vaughan for the last number of years for that as well. The city of Vaughan has purchased land for that hospital so it has a place to live. There's been money allocated by the Ministry of Health under—and this is how far back it goes—then-Health Minister George Smitherman to do initial studies, then an additional \$5 million to do master planning. Most recently, Minister Fantino of the federal government came in and promised 15 million federal dollars. This was unheard of, that federal money should be allocated towards a hospital. He said that he could do it in his campaign, and then he went and did it. Now, I challenge the Liberal government of the day to create that hospital. Let's just see if you're going to do it as an election promise. Again, goodness knows it's needed, and that forms part of—I'm relating back now—the business of whether you fund people in

the 905 in York region in the same way that you fund the 416.

Lastly, before I sit down and yield the floor to my friend, Concord West Ratepayers Association is a very interesting grassroots group in the western part of my riding. This community takes the initiative themselves to bring about change. They want to give input on how growth plans and other projects will impact their lives. I read a petition for the first time into the record today.

Community organizations are there to ensure that their community is enhanced, and what I want to say about these people is that they've been around for many years. They've lived in their homes for 40 years. They moved out to that area at the western side of my riding of Thornhill with a view to nature. They could walk in fields and on paths. They weren't surrounded by anything. Now they've got the 407 to the south, they've got an industrial park to the east, they've got an expanded Highway 7 and infrastructure being built to the north, and they've got one area that's been left to them. Now they've been told that there will ultimately be a transitway built up the centre of the 407 and that right next to their homes there will be a hub for that transitway, a carpark for thousands of cars, and a stop for a new, expanded GO service. Yes, that may not happen, ultimately, until some time after 2020, but it's been earmarked, so it changes the scope of their homes.

Let me tell you how intensely devoted to their homes they are. If you think about it, that probably makes the homes more valuable because of their proximity to this great mass transit, but they don't think of it that way. They wanted their peace and their quiet. They had their peace and their quiet. The government wouldn't listen to them, even though they engaged professionals to come up with alternative plans. So they've now started a grassroots campaign. They have written a letter to Premier McGuinty. They have started writing petitions. They have met with municipal groups. All they really want is to have the ORC land there transferred to the Toronto conservation authority so that they can make the appropriate changes.

It's a great idea. It's something that should be granted to them. Again, it's an example of people who are, for the most part, moving towards the elderly range of the age scale, who want to do something for themselves to preserve their way of life.

The McGuinty government is about money. Any time I ask a question in this House, or any of my colleagues ask a question, we get a money answer: "We've spent this much on this and that much on that and we're going to spend this much on the next thing." Start listening to people. Yes, we'll vote for your supply bill. That's not the issue. But the money is the issue, and the money is really a means by which you address the way of life that people have. They have a right to some of their own choices, and you haven't given them the opportunity to make those choices.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Howard Hampton: I only have a few minutes left, but I only need a couple of minutes to make the points I want to make.

Whenever I tell people from my constituency that I'm going to be speaking on a supply bill and you can raise whatever issues you want during this time, invariably what people have been saying over the last year or so is, "We want you to raise two issues: one, what is happening to our hydro bill, and two, the HST."

Most people in my constituency, and we receive calls virtually weekly, are seeing increases in their hydro bills of \$100 a month, \$150 a month. So even being cautious about it, people are being told to fork over an additional \$1,200 a year for something essential—hydro-electricity—and that's excluding the HST. That's just a \$100-a-month or \$150-a-month increase to the hydro bill alone. Then you stack on the HST, and for people that's \$1,200 a year.

This government has boasted over and over again about how good the HST is going to be for people. You know, Manitoba did a study of this at the same time and rejected the HST. They looked at, first of all, "Is this going to help business?" They concluded that "competitiveness gains, particularly for those sectors exposed to export competition, are very modest," that "relative tax competitiveness ranking of Manitoba manufacturers against other competing cities would not improve with an HST," and "a very large part of the savings to business would not directly or significantly improve the competitive position of the export sector." Sales tax harmonization "is just one dimension of overall tax competitiveness and must be considered in the context of other tax measures."

Then they considered what would happen to people. What they found is that ordinary people would be paying a lot more taxes. In fact, StatsCan has said that middle-income families in Ontario are paying an additional \$823 a year through the HST. So I add it up: \$1,200 a year more on the hydro bill and over \$800 a year more on the HST. People are being asked to pay \$2,000 more a year, but their incomes aren't going up; in fact, if anything, people's incomes are going down. And that's the question that I hope Liberal members are able to answer six months from now: How do you expect people to pay \$2,000 a year more when they have less income?

1720

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate?

Mr. Steve Clark: Before I get into my remarks, I want to mention the previous two Progressive Conservative speakers: first, the member for Thornhill, Peter Shurman. I want to congratulate the member for Thornhill for his private member's bill a couple of weeks ago, Bill 143. I think he really hit the nail on the head when he wanted to provide the opportunity to help seniors, and I'm so disappointed. Originally, we felt that it was something that all parties could vote for, and ultimately the government whipped the vote and turned it down. It was very tragic, because I really believe that the member

had an excellent initiative. He should be commended for standing up for seniors, and I wish the government had done the same that day. It's tragic.

I also want to mention our PC finance critic, the member for Parry Sound–Muskoka, Norm Miller, who spoke first and led off our party's discussions. I was glad that he talked about what we heard at some of the pre-budget consultations from industry leaders and hard-working Ontarians. They gave our caucus some great suggestions on how to get Ontario moving again.

Really, I think all I've heard since I was elected to sit in this place is that people simply can't afford the skyrocketing costs of living in Ontario, whether it be the crazy hydro rates that they're paying—and I'm going to get into some examples of what it's like in the rural riding that I live in, in eastern Ontario. As the months unfold leading up to October, I truly believe that what people want is real relief and change, and I think we're hearing that over and over again.

I also want to mention the press conference that our leader, Tim Hudak, had pre-budget, where he talked about our three key points that we hope will be in the budget: tax relief, focused government spending, and a stimulation of private sector jobs and private sector job creation.

In terms of focusing government spending, certainly the two examples he mentioned that day, which I believe we've talked about on a number of occasions—obviously I think it's important that we put as much money into front-line health care as possible. Certainly, I have an issue with LHINs, and I'm going to talk, if I have enough time, about a specific example that I can't believe; and also the fact that there's a need to have some form of sunset review of agencies to make sure they justify their existence, that they don't just keep operating without that.

But first, last night the council of the municipality of North Grenville passed a motion, and I want to thank Mayor Dave Gordon, Deputy Mayor Ken Finnerty and Councillors Barb Tobin, Terry Butler and Tim Sutton on a resolution. They have a fabulous service in North Grenville, the North Grenville Accessible Transportation organization, NGAT to use its initials. I was there last year at a Trillium application where we were able to replace one of their vehicles, a 1999 vehicle that had served the municipality well, and the Trillium grant allowed them to purchase a 2010 Ford bus.

This is a group that's been in existence for 11 years, founded with the support of the municipality, groups like the United Way, local service clubs and individuals. They received a grant from the United Way and the municipality. Obviously, in a rural municipality they don't have a transit system. They rely on this not-for-profit group to provide accessible transit service, and I can't overstate the need for that type of service in a rural economy, in a rural riding, where mobility is such an important aspect. They passed a motion last night to ask that that the government consider a funding model that would help municipalities, certainly something that our leader,

Tim Hudak, heard recently at ROMA. I think he delivered a bang-on speech about the need for rural infrastructure to be supported. I'm glad that the municipality passed that motion. I'm glad that they sent to me, and I'll certainly be advocating for them.

I want to go back to government agencies. The one example I'm going to use is MPAC, the Municipal Property Assessment Corp., and I'm dealing with a great foundation—

Interjections.

Mr. Steve Clark: Just be quiet for a minute. You're going to learn something here.

An Ontario Trillium grant provided this wonderful non-profit organization, the Spencerville Mill, with \$100,000. We had a great opening back in the fall. The mill is a wonderful space, run by volunteers, not-for-profit. It basically tells the story of the mill and the history of the Spencerville community. It's a heritage building. It connects us with the past and teaches children who go through it of our proud history, showing that that mill was the cornerstone of starting that community. Also, in the winter, A Country Christmas Remembered is the focal point at the Spencerville Mill.

As I said, it was the foundation of the community back in 1811 when Peleg Spencer first built a sawmill. It was destroyed by fire and replaced around 1884. Certainly, we're very blessed that we don't have ruins or photographs but a real building, a real working mill that provides much for history in our community.

However, MPAC classifies that not as a museum, not as a residence, but as a commercial building, even though no commercial revenue is there. In fact, their changes in their assessment—I think that now they pay a couple of hundred bucks; now they're going to be paying \$3,000, I believe.

Let me read you something. They went to MPAC to try to change it from the classification which allows under the act that "land not be used for residential purposes that is owned or occupied by a non-profit service organization, a non-profit private club, a non-profit cultural organization."

The Ministry of Culture funds libraries, it funds museums. However, in the MPAC letter: "The foundation is not a cultural organization in that they do not provide cultural activities for Canadians of a specific ethnic origin." So it's classified as a commercial operation. In fact, when they wrote to MPAC, they were basically told, "If you don't like it, go to court."

So there's a situation where a cultural operation, one that certainly is in keeping with what the Ministry of Culture funds, yet, that agency has no discussion about changes.

In the remaining time, I also want to talk about another issue: smart meters. I know that the member from Parry Sound–Muskoka mentioned it.

I had an email the other day from a lady, Valery Parkinson, who lives up in Oxford Mills, one of the rural areas of my riding. She wrote me on St. Paddy's Day—sent me an email—and was quoting the media in Ottawa

that day that Ottawa Hydro, with over 300,000 customers, has installed smart meters for only about 45,000 of their customers, and they were requesting an extension to the June deadline to have all customers online.

But as a rural hydro user, most of my riding already has smart meters installed at various points of connection.

To give you a heads-up on what we're facing, Valery is a typical rural user. She uses electricity for her necessities. She's got an oil furnace. She's got a wood stove. She uses electricity to illuminate her outbuildings because of wildlife, to bring water into her home, to operate her sump pump.

She went to hydro and asked to do that online examination of her profile. It showed that about three quarters of her usage was in the low to mid-peak range. About 23%, I think, was mid-peak usage. About 25%, which essentially was just her household necessities, was determined to be in that peak period. She estimates that her \$250 monthly bill, when you deal with the 6.5 cents a kilowatt hour going to 9.9 cents—when her time-of-use meter is clicked on, on April 6, 2011, she's going to have a 30% increase.

So when we talk about smart meters and when we say that—the House leader today in his question talked about how 75% of people in Ontario have had an increase in their hydro bill, and about 100% if they have a smart meter. There's an example of what we're faced with in rural Ontario. This isn't the first communication from a constituent that I've brought forward. I've brought forward many of them. I have other communications today that I would love to read into the record.

Just to close, I want to talk about the government House leader. She used the words, "This puts our vision into practice." I remember that quote earlier because certainly the examples that I've given today about her vision—when I see ideas like smart meters, issues that I have highlighted today, there's no vision.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Further debate? Seeing none, I will now put the questions.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Government Services, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Revenue, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Finance, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, including supplementaries, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Transportation, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply for the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

On the motion for concurrence in supply more the Cabinet Office, is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Motions agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): On the motion for second reading of Bill 167, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011, Ms. Smith has moved second reading of the bill. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Second reading agreed to.

SUPPLY ACT, 2011

LOI DE CRÉDITS DE 2011

Ms. Smith, on behalf of Mr. Duncan, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 167, An Act to authorize the expenditure of certain amounts for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011 / Projet de loi 167, Loi autorisant l'utilisation de certaines sommes pour l'exercice se terminant le 31 mars 2011.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be titled as in the motion.

Third reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Orders of the day.

Hon. Monique M. Smith: We have no further business at this time. I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Julia Munro): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Thank you.

This House stands adjourned until 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 1734.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Hon. / L'hon. Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)	Sudbury	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion and Sport / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé et du Sport
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)	St. Catharines	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
Cansfield, Donna H. (LIB)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Carroll, P.C., Hon. / L'hon. Aileen (LIB)	Barrie	
Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Tourism and Culture / Ministre du Tourisme et de la Culture
Chiarelli, Hon. / L'hon. Bob (LIB)	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Clark, Steve (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
Crozier, Bruce (LIB)	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Education / Ministre de l'Éducation
Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Energy / Ministre de l'Énergie

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC) Elliott, Christine (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB) Fonseca, Peter (LIB)	Oakville Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP) Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Kenora–Rainy River Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Hon. / L'hon. Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiles et de l'Immigration
Hoy, Pat (LIB) Hudak, Tim (PC)	Chatham–Kent–Essex Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Hon. / L'hon. Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
McMeekin, Ted (LIB)	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Hon. / L'hon. Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Moridi, Reza (LIB) Munro, Julia (PC)	Richmond Hill York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Murdoch, Bill (PC) Murray, Hon. / L'hon. Glen R. (LIB)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB) O'Toole, John (PC) Oraziotti, David (LIB) Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC) Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB) Peters, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (LIB) Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Gerry (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre Durham Sault Ste. Marie Oshawa Kitchener–Conestoga Elgin–Middlesex–London Scarborough–Agincourt	Speaker / Président de l'Assemblée législative Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Prue, Michael (NDP) Pupatello, Hon. / L'hon. Sandra (LIB)	Beaches–East York Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB) Ramal, Khalil (LIB) Ramsay, David (LIB) Rinaldi, Lou (LIB) Ruprecht, Tony (LIB) Sandals, Liz (LIB) Savoline, Joyce (PC) Sergio, Mario (LIB) Shurman, Peter (PC) Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Monique M. (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord London–Fanshawe Timiskaming–Cochrane Northumberland–Quinte West Davenport Guelph Burlington York West / York-Ouest Thornhill Nipissing	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Sorbara, Greg (LIB) Sousa, Hon. / L'hon. Charles (LIB) Sterling, Norman W. (PC) Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Vaughan Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud Carleton–Mississippi Mills Toronto–Danforth	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
Takhar, Hon. / L'hon. Harinder S. (LIB)	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB) Wilkinson, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB) Wilson, Jim (PC)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex Perth–Wellington Simcoe–Grey	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC) Wynne, Hon. / L'hon. Kathleen O. (LIB) Yakabuski, John (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Garfield Dunlop
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson
Kim Craitor, Bob Delaney
Garfield Dunlop, Peter Fonseca
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Pat Hoy
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Laura Albanese
Laura Albanese, Toby Barrett
Bob Delaney, Kevin Daniel Flynn
Pat Hoy, Helena Jaczek
Norm Miller, Leeanna Pendergast
Peter Tabuns
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

Chair / Président: David Oraziotti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jim Brownell
Jim Brownell, Steve Clark
Kuldip Kular, Dave Levac
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese
Bill Mauro, David Oraziotti
Joyce Savoline
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

Chair / Président: Ernie Hardeman
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown
Donna H. Cansfield, Aileen Carroll, P.C.
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman
Lisa MacLeod, Leeanna Pendergast
Jim Wilson
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de
la justice**

Chair / Président: Lorenzo Berardinetti
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Reza Moridi
Bas Balkissoon, Lorenzo Berardinetti
Ted Chudleigh, Mike Colle
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos
Reza Moridi, Lou Rinaldi
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Yasir Naqvi
Bas Balkissoon, Joe Dickson
Sylvia Jones, Amrit Mangat
Norm Miller, Yasir Naqvi
Michael Prue, Mario Sergio
Maria Van Bommel
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent
des comptes publics**

Chair / Président: Norman W. Sterling
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Peter Shurman
Wayne Arthurs, Aileen Carroll, P.C.
France Gélinas, Jerry J. Ouellette
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals
Peter Shurman, Norman W. Sterling
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller
David Caplan, Kim Craitor
Jeff Leal, Gerry Martiniuk
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch
Michael Prue, Lou Rinaldi
Tony Ruprecht
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon
Vic Dhillon, Cheri DiNovo
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones
Jean-Marc Lalonde, Ted McMeekin
Shafiq Qaadri, Khalil Ramal
Elizabeth Witmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Select Committee on the proposed transaction of the TMX
Group and the London Stock Exchange Group / Comité
spécial sur la transaction proposée entre le Groupe TMX et le
London Stock Exchange Group**

Chair / Président: Gerry Phillips
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Frank Klees
Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs
Gilles Bisson, Michael A. Brown
Frank Klees, Gerry Phillips
Peter Shurman, Maria Van Bommel
David Zimmer
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Tuesday 22 March 2011 / Mardi 22 mars 2011

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry) Amendment Act, 2011, Bill 163, Mr. Bradley / Loi de 2011 modifiant la Loi Christopher sur le registre des délinquants sexuels, projet de loi 163, M. Bradley	
Hon. James J. Bradley	4737
Second reading debate adjourned.....	4741

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4741
Mr. Ted Arnott	4741
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4741
Legislative pages	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	4741

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Energy policies	
Mr. Tim Hudak	4742
Hon. Brad Duguid	4742
Energy policies	
Mr. Tim Hudak	4743
Hon. Brad Duguid	4743
Taxation	
Ms. Andrea Horwath	4744
Hon. Dwight Duncan	4744
Taxation	
Ms. Andrea Horwath	4744
Hon. Dwight Duncan	4744
Energy policies	
Mr. John Yakabuski	4745
Hon. Brad Duguid	4745
Nuclear energy	
Mr. Peter Tabuns	4746
Hon. Brad Duguid	4746
Water supply	
Mr. Rick Johnson	4746
Hon. John Wilkinson	4746
Hon. Glen R. Murray	4747
Compensation for victims of crime	
Mr. Jim Wilson	4747
Hon. James J. Bradley	4747

Poverty

Mr. Michael Prue	4747
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	4747

Post-secondary education

Mrs. Liz Sandals.....	4748
Hon. John Milloy	4748

Community health services

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	4749
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4749

Nuclear waste

Ms. Andrea Horwath	4749
Hon. Brad Duguid	4749

Services en français

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde	4750
L'hon. Kathleen O. Wynne	4750

Hospital funding

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	4750
Hon. Deborah Matthews	4750

Replacement workers

Mme France Gélinas	4751
Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	4751

Child poverty

Mr. Bob Delaney	4751
Hon. Laurel C. Broten	4751

DEFERRED VOTES / VOTES DIFFÉRÉS

Ontario Forest Tenure Modernization Act, 2011, Bill 151, Mr. Gravelle / Loi de 2011 sur la modernisation du régime de tenure forestière en Ontario, projet de loi 151, M. Gravelle	
Second reading agreed to	4752

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

Oxford businesses

Mr. Ernie Hardeman.....	4753
-------------------------	------

Joyce Burnell

Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn	4753
------------------------------	------

Kayla Maduk

Ms. Lisa MacLeod	4753
------------------------	------

Continued on inside back cover

Continued from back cover

Gary Malkowski	
Mr. Michael Prue	4753
Nurses	
Mr. Kim Craitor	4754
Government announcements	
Mr. Bill Murdoch	4754
Alzheimer's disease	
Mrs. Donna H. Cansfield	4754
Bombardier in Thunder Bay	
Mr. Bill Mauro	4754
Loyal Kigabiro	
M. Phil McNeely	4755

MOTIONS

Order of business	
Hon. Monique M. Smith	4755
Motion agreed to	4755

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES

World Water Day / Journée mondiale de l'eau	
Hon. John Wilkinson	4755
Mr. Toby Barrett	4756
Mr. Howard Hampton	4757

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS

Multiple sclerosis treatment	
Mr. Steve Clark	4757
Replacement workers	
Mme France Gélinas	4757
Full-day kindergarten	
Mr. Phil McNeely	4758
Environmental protection	
Mr. Peter Shurman	4758
Travailleurs suppléants	
Mme France Gélinas	4758

Child custody	
Mr. Kim Craitor	4758
Health care funding	
Mr. Jim Wilson	4759
Paramedics	
Mr. Rick Johnson	4759
Rural and northern schools	
Mr. Bill Murdoch	4759
Paramedics	
Mr. Jeff Leal	4760
Coyotes	
Mr. Bill Murdoch	4760
Paramedics	
Mr. Lou Rinaldi	4760
Taxation	
Mr. Jim Wilson	4760
Health care funding	
Mr. Phil McNeely	4760
Assistance to farmers	
Mr. Steve Clark	4761

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Concurrence in supply	
Supply Act, 2011, Bill 167, Mr. Dwight Duncan / Loi de crédits de 2011, projet de loi 167, M. Dwight Duncan	
Hon. Monique M. Smith	4761
Mr. Norm Miller	4762
Mr. Michael Prue	4763
Ms. Leeanna Pendergast	4768
Mr. Peter Shurman	4771
Mr. Howard Hampton	4773
Mr. Steve Clark	4773
Motions agreed to	4775
Second reading agreed to	4775
Supply Act, 2011, Bill 167, Mr. Dwight Duncan / Loi de crédits de 2011, projet de loi 167, M. Dwight Duncan	
Third reading agreed to	4775